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ABSTRACT

These two volumes provide information on the scope of adult and community education (ACE) in Australia and implications for improved data collection and reporting. Volume 1 begins with a glossary. Chapter 1 addresses project objectives and processes and methodology. Chapter 2 analyzes the scope and diversity of ACE in terms of what is currently collected and the information made available through research and consultations for this report. Chapter 3 explores these issues: providers' experience of current data collection arrangements; usefulness to providers of data collected currently; gaps in information collected; extent and kind of data used by providers locally; and possible impact of the goods and services tax (GST) on ACE. Chapter 4 considers the feasibility and costs of expanding the current collection requirements. Appendixes include technical notes and a tabular national overview of ACE. Volume 2 is an analysis of existing information in national education and training data collection. Chapter 1 delineates the scope of data collection: activity as reported by representative bodies for ACE providers and organizations; education and training delivered by community centers; and personal enrichment and training activity. Chapter 2 analyzes data by entire ACE sector and six segments of the nationally reported ACE sector (personal enrichment and VET programs categorized by delivery service and reporting method). (YLB)

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Scope of ACE [Adult Continuing Education] in Australia. Volume 1: Implications for Improved Data Collection and Reporting [and] Volume 2: Analysis of Existing Information in National Education and Training Data Collection.

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NCVER

Scope of ACE in Australia

Implications for improved data collection and reporting

Volume 1

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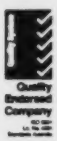

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Glossary of terms and abbreviations

ACE

adult and community education. The report adopts a very broad definition for ACE, to encompass all vocational and non-vocational programs delivered by community providers, and all non-vocational programs delivered by post-secondary education and training providers.

ACFEB

(in Victoria) Adult, Community and Further Education Board.

ALA

Adult Learning Australia, the peak organisation for adult and community education providers and participants, formerly known as Australian Association of Adult and Community Education (AAACE).

annual student contact hours

(abbreviation **ASCH**; also called **annual hours**) the total nominal hours (supervised) for the modules undertaken in a year, used as a measure of total system delivery, e.g. for an institute, State or Territory.

ANTA

Australian National Training Authority.

ANTA-agreement delivery

that part of publicly funded VET which is covered by the ANTA agreement with States/Territories.

AQF

Australian Qualifications Framework. A nationally consistent set of qualifications for all post-compulsory education and training in Australia. Under the AQF, a statement of attainment is issued for partial completion of a qualification.

Australian Recognition Framework

(abbreviation **ARF**) a set of nationally agreed registration requirements for training providers, their products and services. The Australian Recognition Framework supersedes the National Framework for the Recognition of Training (NFROT).

AVETMISS

the Australian Vocational Education and Training Management Information and Statistical Standard (AVETMISS), the data standard for the collection nationally of information on the public VET sector. See also **national collection(s)**.

BACE

(in NSW) Board of Adult and Community Education.

community centre

(also called **community learning centre**, **neighbourhood centre**) a place providing social, educational and recreational facilities for the community.

community college

an educational institution for adults, offering a range of general, vocational, recreational and leisure courses, as well as subjects for the Senior Secondary Certificate of Education.

community education

education programs which are community-based and community-directed and intended primarily for the members of the local community. See also **adult and community education**.

consultations

the series of meetings with representatives of the ACE and VET sectors in each State/Territory, and at national level, to gather and exchange information relating to the 'scope of ACE' project.

funding source

the primary source of the monies or other resources which are used to fund the delivery of education and training programs.

formally recognised VET

(also **formal VET**) VET programs which lead to the award of recognised qualifications under the **Australian Recognition Framework** (ARF).

GST

abbreviation for **goods and services tax**

informal VET

VET programs which do not lead to the award of recognised qualifications under the **Australian Recognition Framework** (ARF).

KPI

key performance indicator, sometimes also known as a 'key performance measure' (KPM) or 'benchmark'.

lifelong learning

the process of acquiring knowledge or skills throughout life via education, training, work and general life experiences.

MCEETYA

Ministerial Council on Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs.

national policy

in this report, refers to the *National Policy on Adult Community Education* (1997).

national collection(s)

the regular collections of vocational education and training data undertaken by the NCVER on behalf of ANTA. The collections comprise the annual collection of data from VET providers, the annual collection of State/Territory financial data, and the quarterly collection of apprenticeship and traineeship data. National data standards (see **AVETMISS**) govern all three collections.

NCVER

National Centre for Vocational Education Research Ltd

non-vocational program

(formerly **stream 1000**) programs or activities where the primary intention is recreation, leisure or personal enrichment and not the development of vocational knowledge or skills. See also **vocational education and training**.

NTETA

Northern Territory Employment and Training Authority

public funding

in this report refers to all State/Territory, Commonwealth and local government recurrent or specific purpose allocations for education and training, excluding funding for higher education, secondary education, primary education or pre-school education.

publicly funded VET

all vocational education and training funded from State/Territory or Commonwealth recurrent or specific purpose allocations for VET, including VET delivered on a fee-for-service basis by public VET organisations, such as institutes of technical and further education (**TAFE**), together with agricultural colleges and university VET campuses or departments in some States/Territories. See also **ANTA-agreement delivery**.

registered training organisation

(abbreviation **RTO**) an organisation registered by a State or Territory recognition authority to deliver training and/or conduct assessments and issue nationally recognised qualifications in accordance with the Australian Recognition Framework. Registered training organisations include TAFE colleges and institutes, adult and community education providers, private providers, community organisations, schools, higher education organisations, commercial and enterprise training providers, industry bodies and other organisations meeting the registration requirements.

state training authority (STA)

the organisation within each State/Territory which has formal responsibility for the management of the public VET system, including management of ANTA-agreement delivery.

stream 1000

programs where the primary intention is recreation, leisure or personal enrichment and not the development of vocational knowledge or skills; an alternative term for 'non-vocational' programs, now superseded.

student outcomes survey (SOS)

a questionnaire-based survey conducted annually by the NCVER on behalf of ANTA to ascertain student views of training, and the outcomes of training, for those who have completed a VET qualification or at least one module; formerly graduate destination survey (GDS).

TAFE

1. (in full **Technical and Further Education**) a publicly funded post-secondary organisation which provides a range of technical and vocational education and training courses and other programs, e.g. entry and bridging courses, language and literacy courses, adult basic education courses, Senior Secondary Certificate of Education courses, personal enrichment courses, and small business courses. Each State and Territory has its own TAFE system.
2. an institution offering TAFE courses; a college or institute.

VET

(also VET program) see **vocational education and training**

vocational education and training

(abbreviation VET, also VET program). Post-compulsory education and training, excluding degree and higher level programs delivered by higher education organisations, which provides people with occupational or work-related knowledge and skills. VET also includes programs which provide the basis for subsequent vocational programs.

vocational education and training provider

(abbreviation **VET provider**) an organisation which delivers vocational education and training programs. In Australia, the providers of vocational education and training comprise the State and Territory TAFE systems, adult and community education providers, agricultural colleges, the VET operations of some universities, schools, private providers, community organisations, industry skill centres, and commercial and enterprise training providers. See also **registered training organisation (RTO)**.

Executive Summary

Adult and community education (ACE) plays an important role in educating and training Australia's people to become a society of lifelong learners. It contributes significantly to the overall education of Australia's population through a network of numerous ACE organisations and providers and the offer and provision of education and training courses in a wide range of fields. In doing this, Australia's ACE sector is a major player in setting up and emphasising the importance of a cultural background that fosters the open attitude towards flexible and lifelong learning.

The Australian National Training Authority (ANTA), endorsed by the MCEETYA ACE Taskforce commissioned the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) to undertake the project on *Scope of Adult and Community Education in Australia and Implications for Improved Data Collection and Reporting*. The NCVER consulted widely with key stakeholders in all States and Territories as part of this project during May 2000.

NCVER found that Australia's ACE sector shows great diversity and versatility with training organisations and providers delivering both vocational as well as non-vocational programs. While some ACE providers receive government funding from State/Territory or Commonwealth recurrent or specific-purpose allocations for VET, other ACE activity is funded on a fee-for-service basis, and volunteers or unpaid workers deliver some programs.

Partly because of this diversity the reporting on the training activity within Australia's ACE sector is a difficult task. Currently there is no national data standard for ACE and no obligation for providers to pass on data on ACE activity to a national ACE data collection except for that part which is funded from State/Territory or Commonwealth recurrent or specific purpose allocations for VET.

Reporting on ACE also varies quite considerably among the States and Territories. Some States/Territories, like Western Australia or the Northern Territory, have hardly any reporting mechanisms for ACE in place. The national VET data collection therefore only contains a small amount of information on ACE activity in those States/Territories. Other States/Territories, like Victoria and New South Wales, have established, and regularly update, State/Territory ACE data collections that capture activity of about 70% to 80% of ACE participants. As a result, in NSW and Victoria, and to a lesser extent in South Australia and Tasmania, the majority of the State/Territory ACE activity is reported to the national VET data collection.

Taking a broad view of adult and community education, NCVER estimates, very approximately, that in 1998 1.2 million to 1.4 million people, or 8.0% to 9.5% of Australia's adult population, were enrolled in some form of ACE. This ACE activity amounted to an estimated 25 million to 30 million hours of training.

The age and sex profile of these ACE students is remarkably consistent across the States and Territories.

- About three-quarters of ACE students are female.
- The median age of the ACE student population is approximately 40 years, about five years above the median age of Australia's population (35 years).

The information outlined below comprises all activity, including VET, delivered by adult and community education providers in receipt of State/Territory or Commonwealth recurrent or specific purpose allocations for VET, and some that is voluntarily reported to a State or Territory training authority.

In 1998, the national VET data collection contained data on ACE activity undertaken by 582 000 students. These students were enrolled either with community providers or in personal enrichment programs or both. ACE students aged 15 years or more (99% of the nationally reported ACE students) represented 3.9% of Australia's 1998 population of age 15 years or more.

In total, ACE activity nationally reported to the NCVER in 1998 accounted for more than 21.2 million training hours. Training associated with Australia's ACE sector and reported to the collection has been delivered at almost 940 different training locations.

Of the 582 000 ACE students (or about half the NCVER's total estimate) reported nationally in 1998;

- 71% were female and 29% male
- 50% were older than 38.5 years indicating that ACE students, on average, are significantly older than students participating in other post-compulsory education
- 22% undertook formal VET and 21% informal VET
- 62% were enrolled in personal enrichment programs (Table 2.1)[1]
- 82% were enrolled with community providers and 18% with other providers (TAFE institutes, universities etc.).

The distinction between 'vocational' and 'non-vocational' programs is based on the curricular intent (or expected vocational outcome) of the program. Under the old VET statistical Standard (AVETMISS 2.0) every training organisation that supplied information on courses was required to classify each course by stream of study[2]. Vocational streams were streams 2100 to 4500 while stream 1000 classified non-vocational, recreation, leisure and personal enrichment programs. This is the classification used here to distinguish between 'vocational' and 'non-vocational' ACE programs.

Vocational programs can be accredited and lead to a recognised qualification. If a student was enrolled in a program that could result in a qualification classified under the Australian Qualification Framework (AQF) or the old Register of Awards in Tertiary Education (RATE), or in other certificates (including statements of attainment and endorsements to certificates), the vocational program is considered formal. Informal VET comprises all non-award vocational programs as well as module enrolment only activity. The table below illustrates this mix of programs.

[1] Students can be enrolled in both VET as well as personal enrichment programs. Therefore the percentages shown here add to more than 100.

[2] Even though under the new AVETMIS Standard 3.0 the stream of study classification has become obsolete, the vocational outcome is still reported as being either "vocational" or "non-vocational".

Table: ACE activity by program type

Program type	Students (%)	Annual Hours (%)
Formal VET	22.3	46.6
Informal VET	20.7	14.7
Total VET	*41.7*	*61.3*
Personal enrichment	*61.5*	*38.7*
Total (%)	*100.0*	*100.0*
Total	**582 000**	**21.2 million**

Note: The student column adds to more than 100% since some students undertake courses belonging to more than one program type.

During consultations, NCVER found that reporting to the AVETMIS Standard still presents difficulties to some providers, particularly small providers. This varies between States/Territories depending on how long reporting arrangements have been in place and what arrangements exist at the state government level.

Further, where providers are reporting to State Training Authorities (or other government agencies requiring such information), it appears that this information is seldom fed back to them for their own use. The information is therefore perceived largely as an imposition to ensure funding rather than a tool in management or planning. There was difference in opinion on this issue depending on whether providers had a commercial or advocacy role and what their core business was. That is, where a provider was part of a formally funded system, such as the public VET system or public funding from other sources, they were more likely to be sympathetic to the need for data collection.

Market information or market intelligence was seen by all (regardless of their funding status) as more valuable than enrolment, provider and organisational data. The majority if not all providers undertook customer satisfaction/ course evaluation feedback. This kind of information, including what students gained from their course, where they went on completion, what they thought of the course and where they found out about the course were seen as critical to the viability of the organisation. There was also interest in assessing and evaluating the learner's experience of the course. Instruments for collecting this information vary where they exist and are largely self-administered in class or face-to-face.

Providers consulted felt that any information collection arrangement should attempt to capture the outcomes in terms of the social and personal impact of adult and community education as well as vocational and employment related outcomes. Many felt that their own evaluation processes captured this information already, albeit the information was more likely to be qualitative than quantitative.

It is clear that gaps in the information currently collected preclude the development of national KPIs for ACE. On the other hand, the amount of detail which is collected is already seen by many in the ACE sector as adequate if not onerous.

The exception to this as noted above is 'market intelligence'. Gaps in information identified here included

- socio-economic information relating to clients
- whether clients were returning or repeat custom

- mode of transport to and from course
- what goals and outcomes had been achieved through training
- pathways before and after experience in adult and community education
- retention information
- sources of information about adult and community education
- local and regional level information, both about existing clients and potential clients.

Because of the current uneven development of information arrangements for adult and community education, NCVER considers there is a need for some additional information about adult and community education nationally. In order to meet the needs of users and allow for the possibility of a limited set of KPIs, this information needs to be broader in scope than is collected at present, but limited in depth in comparison with what is collected for the public VET system. This is underlined by the current review of the national strategy underway under the auspice of MCEETYA Adult and Community Education Taskforce and indeed, the variable depth and scope of quantitative information revealed through this project.

However, in looking at whether or not to extend the current scope of the collection it is important to consider both the need for and likely reception to, extending the scope to adult and community providers not in receipt of State/Territory or Commonwealth recurrent or specific purpose allocations for VET or other public funds. The level of detail currently collected for the public VET system (see glossary definition) is clearly the outer limit for ACE-sector activity. In fact, the NCVER suggests that the requirements for a limited set of national KPIs could be met by collecting information in considerably less detail than applies to VET.

Recommendations

We recommend that:

1. The current arrangements be retained for all providers in the public VET system in Australia including full compliance with the AVETMIS Standard.

   This is cost neutral.

2. The issue of reporting and/or collecting a reduced amount of information in relation to personal and recreational programs be considered by the National Training Statistics Committee.

   This is cost neutral.

3. ANTA and the National Training Statistics Committee pursue with the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) the feasibility of collecting more information about participation in ACE through the ABS education and training survey or other relevant instruments.

   Costs: The cost of this could be expected to be in the range of $50,000 - $100,000.

4. Information on and by ACE providers be collected as a scoping exercise similar to this project every three to five years. Such a process would be greatly assisted if adult and community education advisory bodies in States and Territories held registers of adult and community providers in their states and updated these on a regular basis.

   Cost: $100,000 every three to five years in additional funding.

5. In order to assess the feasibility of a collection of summary statistical information from ACE providers, we recommend conducting a pilot project on establishing an aggregated, provider-level ACE data collection with a diverse cross-section of ACE providers, to test the efficacy and restrictions of such an approach. The pilot project would not need to cover providers already included in existing data collection arrangements, such as Board of Adult and Community Education (BACE) providers in NSW and Adult, Community and Further Education Board (ACFEB) providers in Victoria.

   Cost: approximately $50 000 for designing data collection and data validation process, conducting pilot project, evaluating feasibility and estimating costs for national aggregate data collection. Costs highly depend on the extent of pilot project.

6. Common, do-it-yourself survey tools be developed for use by adult and community education providers in line with current development of a standard national do-it-yourself survey with a capacity for local customisation, for use within VET, including the use of electronic tools for data analysis

   Cost: this would be at marginal cost or cost neutral, as there is an existing developmental project within the survey program for vocational education.

   As an extension to provide a national perspective for KPI purposes, the feasibility of extending the survey to a sample of ACE providers to provide reliable information on outcomes should be explored with peak ACE organisations.

   Extension cost: The final cost will depend on sample size and logistics, but could be expected to be approximately $50 000.

7. NCVER investigate the possibility of developing an ACE — specific publication in the future, on an annual basis.

1. Introduction

Adult and community education (ACE) plays an important role in educating and training Australia's people to become a society of lifelong learners. It contributes significantly to the overall education of Australia's population through a network of numerous ACE organisations and providers and the offer and provision of education and training courses in a wide range of fields. In doing this, Australia's ACE sector is a major player in setting up and emphasising the importance of a cultural background that fosters the open attitude towards flexible and lifelong learning.

The project on *Scope of Adult and Community Education in Australia and Implications for Improved Data Collection and Reporting* was commissioned by the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) and endorsed by the MCEETYA ACE Taskforce.

1.1 Objectives of the project

The specific objectives of the project were to:

- Scope the provision of adult and community education in Australia
- Scope the current collection of data at the national and State/Territory level
- Review the scope and purpose of the data to assist in developing a statistics collection for ACE that measures achievement against objectives
- Identify gaps in data elements collected nationally
- Assess the feasibility of expanding the current collection arrangements to allow for more comprehensive collection and reporting of adult and community education delivery
- Estimate costs nationally and to States/Territories of any possible expansion to current collection arrangements.

The report *'Key Performance Indicators for Adult Community Education'* prepared by Kaye Schofield and Associates [3] concluded that there was, at that time, 'no shared view within the sector as to the set of performance indicators which can best capture the diversity of ACE activity and the outputs and outcomes of ACE.' However, the report did propose that the seven performance measures adopted by the VET sector, coupled with the strategic objectives set forth in the *National Policy on Adult Community Education* (1997) could, with appropriate adaptation, serve as the basis for KPIs for ACE.

As noted in the report, performance indicators address the relationships among four elements, namely:

- The resources used (inputs)
- What is done (processes)
- What is produced (outputs)
- What impacts are achieved (outcomes).

However, since not all ACE activity is funded from public allocations for VET or from other sources of public funds (e.g. State/Territory or local government) and issues of public accountability generally do not apply uniformly, accountability for inputs and processes is partly a matter for resolution by the provider. In these instances, and across ACE generally,

[3] *'Key Performance Indicators for Adult Community Education'* prepared by Kaye Schofield and Associates for the MCEETYA ACE Taskforce

there is an argument for KPI (and therefore information collection) to focus increasingly on market intelligence, including client destinations and satisfaction studies. This approach is adopted here, and is supported by the views expressed in project consultations.

By addressing the issue of the scope of ACE in Australia and the implications for improved data collection and reporting, the present report is an important step in the process of developing workable KPIs for the ACE sector.

1.2 Processes and methodology

The project required a multi-stage methodology which included desk work, consultation and document review. The following table 1.1 outlines the processes and methodologies used.

Table 1.1 Process and methodology

Requirement	Activities and methodologies
Scope the provision of adult and community education in Australia	Use the project Steering Group as a resource for information and advice. Identify the principal ACE stakeholders and contacts in each state[4], and a group of ACE-sector providers (small, medium and large) to participate in consultations. Obtain and collate information on scope from ACE stakeholders and contacts, and from state training authorities[5]. Identify and document, qualitatively, the extent to which ACE-sector activity extends beyond that of the publicly-funded VET sector in each state. Identify and document how ACE-sector activity is funded in each state and any reporting obligations related to funding.
Scope the current collection of data at the national and state level	Analyse, statistically, reported activity by training provider type and programme type. Report, statistically, on the relationship between national reporting scope and reported ACE-sector activity which falls outside the required reporting scope. Report, statistically, on trends in the relative contribution of VET and non-VET activity in total reported activity. Summarise reported ACE-sector activity by field of study, area of learning and qualification level, and identify trends over the period 1996 to 1999.
Identify gaps in data elements collected nationally	Document the extent of reporting against all elements of the AVETMIS Standard over the period 1996 to 1999. Identify any data elements relevant to the ACE sector which are not part of AVETMISS. Document the likely impact of improved systems and reporting by ACE-sector providers, including the impact of release 3 of AVETMISS. Obtain from stakeholders views on data elements required from the ACE-sector to meet national information requirements. Formulate options for comment and costing (these will range from doing nothing to full-compliance with the AVETMIS Standard).

[4] The term 'state' is used here to refer to all States and Territories.
[5] The term 'state training authority' refers to all State and Territory training authorities.

Assess the feasibility of expanding the current collection arrangements to allow for more comprehensive collection and reporting of ACE-sector delivery	Undertake a round of consultations with stakeholders and provider representatives to obtain more detailed input and to discuss options. Obtain stakeholder views on jurisdictional information requirements for ACE and assess the feasibility of expanding the current collection arrangements. Prepare a 'reactions paper' for circulation to stakeholders and provider representatives. Request stakeholder and provider representatives to comment formally on the feasibility of various reporting scenarios. Convene a national forum of state and territory representatives to consider preliminary findings.
Estimate costs nationally and to states of any possible expansion to current collection arrangements	Request stakeholders (including the NCVER) and provider representatives to make cost estimates for various reporting scenarios. This will include the costs associated with hardware/software, training and staff support to expand the current collection arrangements. Identify any national initiatives which might control costs and assist providers with reporting (e.g. software).
Final project outputs	A detailed consolidated report with supporting documentation and analyses, and recommendations. A suggested implementation plan, with costings, for the project recommendations. An executive summary suitable for circulation to providers and interested parties.

1.3 Project timelines

The project was undertaken over seven months during 2000. Table 1.2 indicates the development timetable.

Table 1.2 Project timelines

Date of Completion	Activity
Stage 1 Project Commencement	
Week ending 14th January 2000	Project Steering Group established. Draft methodology paper completed.
Week ending 4th February 2000	Steering Group meeting 1. Methodology paper, timeframe, deliverables and consultation targets agreed to.
Stage 2 Data Analysis and Interpretation	
3rd April, 2000	Steering Group meeting 2. Discuss consultations and forum.
Week ending 28th April 2000	Analysis of current national provider data completed.
Week ending 26th April 2000	Analysis of other data through VET surveys and ABS completed. Data summary paper completed and delivered to ANTA.
2nd May, 2000	Discussion of Summary data paper at Steering Group meeting 3 (teleconference).
Stage 3 Consultations	
Week ending 1st June, 2000	Consultations completed with key stakeholders.
2nd June, 2000	Discussion of Interim report and findings at Steering Group meeting 4 (teleconference).
7th June 2000	Forum of MCEETYA and ACE project representatives conducted in Melbourne.
Stage 4 Report Development	
Week ending 30th June 2000	Draft final report completed and delivered to ANTA and the Steering Group.
Week ending 30th June 2000	Final report modified as required and delivered to ANTA.

2. Scope of adult and community education

Australia's adult and community education (ACE) sector shows great diversity and versatility and providers delivering both vocational as well as non-vocational programs. While some ACE providers receive government funding from State/Territory or Commonwealth recurrent or specific-purpose allocations for VET, other ACE activity is funded on a fee-for-service basis, and some programs are delivered by volunteers.

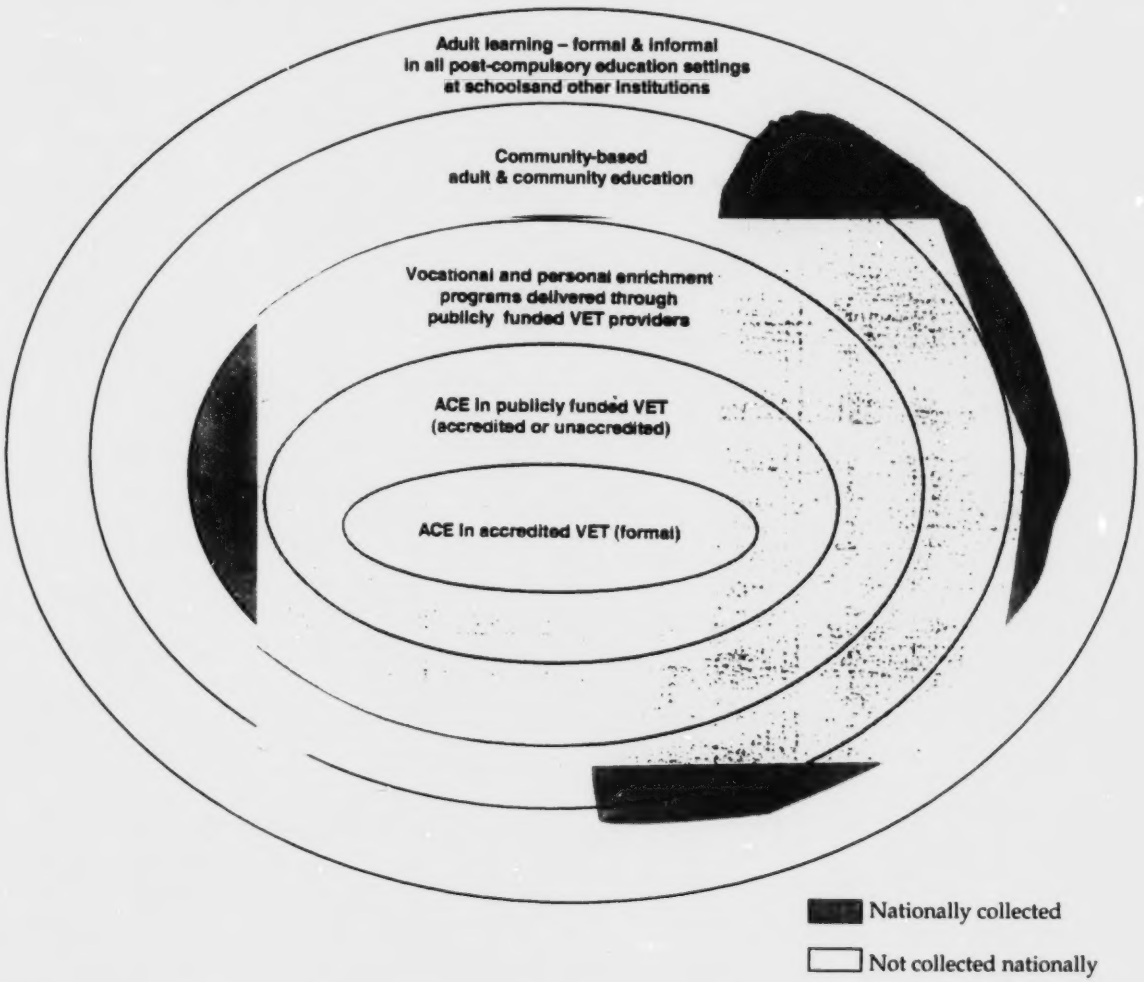
Partly because of this diversity the reporting on the training activity within Australia's ACE sector is a difficult task. Currently there is no national data standard for ACE and no obligation for providers to pass on data on ACE activity to a national ACE data collection except for that part which is funded from State/Territory or Commonwealth recurrent or specific purpose allocations for vocational education and training (VET).

Reporting on ACE also varies quite considerably among the States and Territories. Some States/Territories, like Western Australia or the Northern Territory, have few reporting mechanisms for ACE in place. The national VET data collection therefore only contains a small amount of information on ACE activity in those States/Territories. Other States/Territories, like Victoria and New South Wales, have established, and regularly update, State/Territory ACE data collections that capture activity of about 70% to 80% of ACE participants. As a result, in NSW and Victoria, and to a lesser extent in South Australia and Tasmania, the majority of the State/Territory ACE activity is reported to the national VET data collection.

The following diagram (figure 2.1) illustrates the scope of adult and community education in Australia and where data is collected. The outermost circle depicts ACE in its broadest definition, namely ACE as being post-compulsory adult learning in all formal and informal settings delivered by community and non-community training providers, while the innermost circle represents that part of ACE that is delivered in formal VET programs by community-based providers. The smaller the circle, the narrower the scope for ACE. (The shading indicates which parts of ACE are currently collected as a by-product of the national collection of VET data).

Because at the present time there is no agreed scope, and coverage varies considerably among the States/Territories, the data available do not provide an adequate basis for developing and implementing national KPIs for ACE, nor for consistent capture of information generally.

Figure 2.1: Scope of Adult and Community Education in Australia from a national perspective



NCVER estimates, very approximately, that in 1998 1.2 million to 1.4 million people, or 8.0% to 9.5% of Australia's adult population, were enrolled in some form of ACE. This ACE activity amounted to an estimated 25 million to 30 million hours of training.

The basis for these estimates is provided in Appendices 2 and 3.

The age and sex profile of ACE students is remarkably consistent across the States and Territories.

- About three-quarters of these ACE students are female.
- The median age of the ACE student population is approximately 40 years, about five years above the median age of Australia's population (35 years).

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2.1 Segmenting the Scope of ACE

Some differences of opinion exist as to what actually constitutes adult and community education (ACE). The official or working definitions are found to vary among the States and Territories (see results of NCVER's desktop analysis – Appendix 5). The situation is further complicated by different opinions among providers and other ACE stakeholders within each State/Territory on what to include in ACE and what not. Views on the definition of ACE, as expressed in the consultation rounds held by NCVER, range from learning activity including only education, training and related services provided by community-based, community-managed organisations, to activity encompassing all post-compulsory training and education activity that contributes to the process of lifelong learning.

The diversity of definitions and variations in business arrangements among States and Territories add a great deal of difficulty to the task of scoping ACE in Australia. Underlying any scope for measurement or KPI purposes is a definition or set of parameters. Without making a decision on what these parameters are, the data collection and reporting is more than problematical.

In accordance with the Steering Committee's advice, NCVER has therefore adopted a broad scoping of ACE to capture the full diversity of the sector. However, looking at existing collections, the NCVER has included only:

- All education and training activity which is delivered by community-based or community-managed organisations with focus on providing learning opportunities for adults or contributing to the recurrent vocational, personal, cultural and social development of adults; **and**
- All education and training activity whose intention is non-vocational but contributes to the personal, cultural or social development of students, and which is delivered by TAFE institutes, universities, schools, commercial, industry or other private providers which are in receipt of State/Territory or Commonwealth recurrent or specific purpose allocations for VET.

The adult and community education sector can also be viewed as a market, involving providers and purchasers or users of services. The provider side of the market for adult and community education can be divided into those for whom the delivery of adult and community education is core business (accounting for roughly three-quarters of the students in the sector) and those for whom it is an adjunct, albeit an important one.

The current collection of ACE data, which is a by-product of the national collection of information on the public VET sector (see glossary), is centred largely on those for whom adult and community education is a core activity. The remaining market in this area which is not currently captured includes:

- most activity offered by Universities of the Third Age (U3A) and Schools for Seniors in States/Territories other than Victoria as well as some of Victoria's U3A activity
- some activity delivered by Community and Neighbourhood Houses, Community Adult Education Centres and Community Learning Centres
- non-TAFE activity in Western Australia
- non-vocational adult education programs and evening classes delivered at some Australian universities and libraries, and by the Evening and Community College's Association
- some recreation, leisure or personal enrichment activity at TAFE centres, which allows community access to TAFE facilities in accordance with State/Territory policies

- some activity at private and government secondary schools; and
- private recreation, leisure and personal enrichment activity such as that provided through cultural associations (Alliance Française, health centres, dance studios).

Funding for the ACE sector comes from a wide variety of sources, including:

- Public funds to deliver VET programs, disbursed from State/Territory and Commonwealth recurrent allocations for VET
- State/Territory and Commonwealth specific-purpose allocations for VET
- State/Territory administrative and support payments to ACE providers
- Payments made by public- or private-sector organisations for the delivery of specific ACE programs (for example, local government and community bodies, State/Territory health and community services organisations, employers purchasing education or training services for their employees)
- Tuition or membership fees paid by students undertaking ACE programs.

It is important to note that the scope of the current collection is determined largely by the reach of State/Territory or Commonwealth recurrent or specific purpose allocations for VET in what is a very contestable market. Those organisations which are successful in bidding for available funds in one year (and hence form part of the national VET collection for that year) may not be in subsequent years even though carrying out the same activity. This contributes to the variable scope in collecting national performance information. This variability is less in NSW and Victoria, where the Board of Adult Community Education and the Adult, Community and Further Education Board, respectively, collect data from the great majority of ACE providers at least once a year.

An approximate estimate of the size of the whole sector is given in Appendix 3.

2.2 Nationally reported ACE activity through the NCVER

As noted, the reporting mechanisms which do exist are typically only in place where data collection and collation are part of a State/Territory or Commonwealth funding arrangement for VET. The national VET data collection mirrors, to a large extent, such funding arrangements. It primarily collects data on VET as delivered by providers whose training delivery is funded, wholly or partly, from State/Territory or Commonwealth recurrent or specific-purpose allocations for VET. Government funding from sources other than allocations for VET do not generally result in data reporting to the NCVER even though data may be reported separately to the relevant funding authority.

Vocational education and training is defined as education or training activity which develops specific vocational skills or imparts knowledge which is needed in specific vocational contexts. VET also includes general education and training activity, and activity intended to develop generic skills in areas such as literacy and numeracy which serve as preparation for subsequent, more specific, vocational education or training activity. Consequently, vocational education and training can be seen as a subset of adult and community education when the latter is broadly defined.

The information outlined below comprises all activity, including VET, delivered by adult and community education providers in receipt of State/Territory or Commonwealth recurrent or specific purpose allocations for VET, and some that is voluntarily reported to a State or Territory training authority.

In 1998, the national VET data collection contained data on ACE activity undertaken by 582 000 students[6]. These students were enrolled either with community providers or in personal enrichment programs or both. ACE students aged 15 years or more (99% of the nationally reported ACE students) represented 3.9% of Australia's 1998 population of age 15 years or more.

In total, ACE activity nationally reported in 1998 accounted for more than 21.2 million training hours[6]. Training associated with Australia's ACE sector and reported to the collection has been delivered at almost 940 different training locations.

Of the 582 000 (or about half the NCVER's total estimates) ACE students nationally reported in 1998;

- 71% were female and 29% male
- 50% were older than 38.5 years indicating that ACE students, on average, are significantly older than students participating in other post-compulsory education
- 22% undertook formal VET and 21% informal VET
- 62% were enrolled in personal enrichment programs (Table 2.1)[7,8]
- 82% were enrolled with community providers and 18% with other providers (TAFE institutes, universities etc.).

Of those ACE students who provided information on their employment status[9] 70% were employed, 11% unemployed and 19% not in the labour force. The employment profile of students depends significantly on whether students undertake formal VET, informal VET or personal enrichment programs (see Appendix 2).

Of the 21.2 million annual ACE hours in the national VET database, almost half (47%) were delivered in accredited VET courses, 15% in informal VET programs and 39% in personal enrichment programs (Table 2.1). Until 1998, module outcomes for ACE activity were reported to the national collection on a voluntary basis. For this reason successful module completions for ACE activity are understated. However, the reported data for 1998 show that at least half (47%) of the annual hours for ACE activity resulted in successful completions.[10] For more details on module outcome see Appendix 2.

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[6] Our estimates suggest that the national VET data collection contains information on roughly 40% to 50% Australia's ACE population and in the region of 70% to 90% of ACE activity measured in terms of annual hours.
[7] Students can be enrolled in both VET as well as personal enrichment programs. Therefore the percentages shown here add to more than 100.
[8] It should be noted that in Australia there exists VET which is not funded by the States/Territories or the Commonwealth. Since reporting of VET activity is a requirement of the funding arrangements between training organisations and public funding agencies, privately funded VET activity is not necessarily reported to the national VET database. Therefore the national data collection only contains such information on privately-funded VET activity that is provided to the NCVER on a voluntary basis.
[9] Only 50% of students supply information on their employment status. Therefore caution should be exercised when interpreting these figures.
[10] For about 40% of the annual hours the module outcome is not known since under AVETMISS 2.0 community-based providers were not obliged to report module outcomes to the national VET data collection. Under the new AVETMIS Standard 3.0, however, module outcomes have to be reported by all providers.

2.2.1 ACE activity by program type

The distinction between 'vocational' and 'non-vocational' programs is based on the curricular intent (or expected vocational outcome) of the program[11]. Under the old AVETMISS 2.0 every training organisation that supplied information on courses was required to classify each course by stream of study[12]. Vocational streams were streams 2100 to 4500 while stream 1000 classified non-vocational, recreation, leisure and personal enrichment programs. This is the classification used here to distinguish between 'vocational' and 'non-vocational' ACE programs.

Vocational programs can be accredited and lead to a recognised qualification. If a student was enrolled in a program that could result in a qualification classified under the Australian Qualification Framework (AQF) or the old Register of Awards in Tertiary Education (RATE), or in other certificates (including statements of attainment and endorsements to certificates), the vocational program is considered formal. Informal VET comprises all non-award vocational programs as well as module enrolment only activity.

Table 2.1: ACE activity by program type

Program type	Students (%)	Annual Hours (%)
Formal VET	22.3	46.6
Informal VET	20.7	14.7
Total VET	*41.7*	*61.3*
Personal enrichment	*61.5*	*38.7*
Total (%)	*100.0*	*100.0*
Total	**582 000**	**21.2 million**

Note: The student column adds to more than 100% since some students undertake courses belonging to more than one program type.

2.2.2 Accredited vocational ACE activity reported nationally

In Australia's nationally reported ACE sector the provision of formal programs with vocational intent experienced significant growth over the past two years with student numbers increasing by 43% between 1996 (90 500 students) and 1998 (129 600) and annual hours by 90% (1996: 5.2 million hours; 1998: 9.9 million hours). Along with this increase, ACE activity in informal VET and personal enrichment programs decreased.

Of the 129 600 ACE students participating in formal VET programs in 1998:

- about two-thirds (66%) were female and one-third male, and
- half were older than 37.1 years.

They averaged 76 hours of training per person in 1998, significantly less than the average number of hours (204 hours) undertaken by students in rest of the public VET sector.

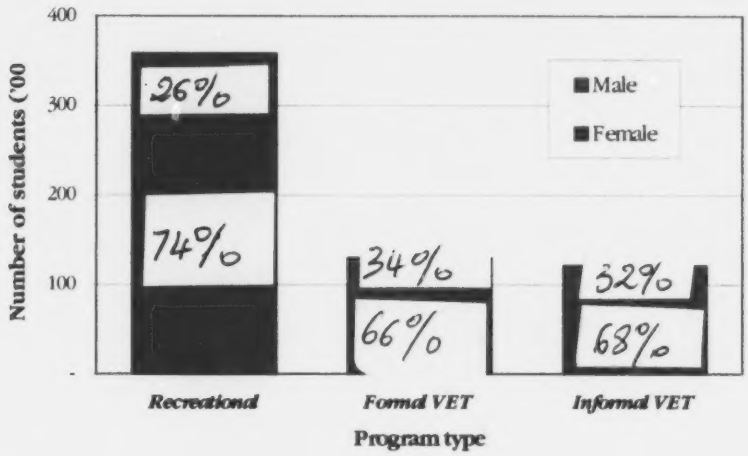
More than half of students were enrolled in courses that lead to statements of attainment, certificates of competency or proficiency, or endorsements to certificates, accounting for less than one quarter (22%) of annual ACE hours reported nationally. AQF-II qualifications were undertaken by one-fifth of the students accounting for slightly more than one quarter of annual hours.

[11] The classification 'non-vocational' therefore does not take into account the personal intent of the student which may as well be vocational.

[12] Even though under the new AVETMIS Standard 3.0 the stream of study classification has become obsolete, the vocational outcome is still reported as being either "vocational" or "non-vocational".

Most of the annual hours in the formal vocational ACE sector were funded from State/Territory or Commonwealth recurrent or specific purpose allocations for VET (96%). Only 3% were funded on a fee-for-service basis (unknowns: 1%).

Figure 2.2: Nationally reported ACE participation numbers by sex and program type



2.2.3 Informal vocational ACE activity reported nationally

While the nationally reported participation of ACE students in informal vocational training activity remained fairly steady over the past two years (1996: 123 700 students, 1998: 120 800 students), annual hours dropped quite significantly from 5.3 million hours in 1996 by 42% to 3.1 million in 1998.

Of the 120 800 nationally reported ACE students enrolled in informal VET activity in 1998,

- more than two-thirds (68%) were female and less than one-third male; and
- half were older than 38.4 years.

This indicates that ACE students enrolled in informal VET programs on average are slightly older and more likely to be female than those enrolled in formal VET programs.

ACE students enrolled in informal VET programs, on average, undertook 26 hours in 1998, about one-third of the training load of ACE students in formal VET programs.

Almost three-quarters of the annual hours in the informal vocational ACE sector were funded from State/Territory or Commonwealth recurrent or specific purpose allocations for VET (74%), the remaining quarter (25%) on a fee-for-service basis (unknowns: 2%)[13].

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[13] Percentages add to more than 100 due to rounding.

2.2.4 Non-vocational activity reported nationally[14]

Non-vocational ('personal enrichment') ACE activity is characterised by short courses mainly consisting of one or two modules. In 1998 personal enrichment activity accounted for 358 200 students, 8.2 million hours, 501 200 module enrolments and 470 200 course enrolments and was delivered by more than 620 providers.

Community-based organisations are the most important providers for personal enrichment programs. In 1998, they accounted for 70% of students, 74% of annual hours, 73% of module enrolments and 75% of course enrolments delivered at more than 620 different provider locations.

TAFE and other government providers accounted for 30% of students, 25% of annual hours, 27% of module enrolments and 25% of course enrolments respectively.

Private and other non-government providers play a marginal role in the provision of personal enrichment education and training.

Personal enrichment and training activity, as reported to the national VET data collection, experienced an apparent decline over the past years. From 1996 to 1998:

- Student numbers dropped by 68 100 or 16.0%
- Annual hours decreased by 1.045 million hours or 11.3%.

This decline is partly due to improved data quality and enhancement in the scope of data reporting to the national VET collection with student numbers enrolled in 'module enrolment only' training activity (which is classified as VET) increasing from 100 in 1996 to 24 600 in 1998.

More details on the formal vocational, informal vocational and non-vocational parts of Australia's ACE sector reported to the national VET database can be found in Appendix 2.

2.2.5 Nationally reported ACE activity provided by community-based organisations

In 1998, nationally reported education and training delivered by community-based organisations amounted to 19.1 million of annual training hours and 475 600 students comprising 82% of ACE students and 90% of annual ACE hours in the national VET data collection. This activity has been delivered at almost 700 different locations. The total training activity comprised 846 700 module enrolments and 676 000 course enrolments.

Vocational ACE accounted for half (51%) of ACE students, two-thirds (68%) of ACE annual hours and 70% of module enrolments in ACE. It was delivered at about 630 different provider locations. Slightly more than one quarter (27%) of the ACE students undertook accredited vocational programs accounting for more than half (52%) of annual hours delivered by community providers.

Personal enrichment activity was delivered by 370 providers and comprised 53% of students, 32% of annual hours and 43% of module enrolments.

As compared with 1996, training delivered by community providers has shown an increase in module enrolments and annual hours. However, overall student numbers have decreased marginally. This suggests that community providers may have shifted towards delivering VET rather than personal enrichment programs. Further, in 1998 more community providers (almost 700) reported to the VET provider data collection than in 1996 (around 550).

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[14] A detailed statistical analysis of the non-vocational ACE sector can be found in NCVER's publication *Australian Personal Enrichment Education and Training Programs Statistics 1998: an overview.*

While in 1996 some 489 000 students were enrolled with community providers reporting to the national VET data collection, this number dropped by 2.8% to 475 600 in 1998. However, total annual hours experienced significant growth over the two-year period under consideration. While in 1996 17.1 million hours of ACE were delivered, this number increased by 2.0 million, or 11.6%, to 19.1 million in 1998. Module enrolments also increased by 19.0% from 1996 to 1998, indicating a tendency of stronger modularisation of VET courses.

In 1996, vocational ACE programs accounted for 43% of students, 62% of annual hours, a noticeably lower proportion than in 1998 (51% of students and 68% of annual hours).

2.3 Outputs and outcomes information currently available

At the present time, very limited information is available nationally, and on a regular basis, about the outputs and outcomes from ACE-sector activity.

Some providers who submit data to the national VET collection include information about module results (pass, fail etc) and details of completed qualifications. However, this information is provided on a voluntary basis because, before 1999, ACE providers were not required to report module or course completions information as specified in the AVETMIS Standard. It should be noted that this same limitation applies to private providers receiving State/Territory or Commonwealth recurrent or specific purpose allocations for VET.

However, once ACE providers who receive public VET allocations to deliver VET programs are in a position to comply fully with the AVETMIS Standard, it will be possible to include their contribution to national skills formation within the domain of formally recognised VET in the performance measures for the public VET system.

In relation to outcomes, ACE providers in some States and Territories have expressed an interest in participating in the annual graduate destination and student outcomes surveys conducted by the NCVER. However, limitations in management information systems, concerns about confidentiality, logistical difficulties and the need to tailor these VET surveys to the ACE sector, have to date prevented reliable reporting despite the participation of some providers.

Some ACE organisations have undertaken research studies into the outputs and outcomes of participation in ACE. However, these studies tend to be limited in scope and do not provide national or nationally consistent information. As a result of these limitations, national KPIs for ACE based on outputs or outcomes information cannot be produced at the present time.

3. Collection and reporting issues

The previous chapter has discussed and analysed the scope and diversity of adult and community education, both in terms of what is currently collected, as well as information made available through research and consultations for this report.

A number of other issues arose as part of the NCVER's consultations and these are discussed below in addition to the issue of gaps in current data collection raised as part of the terms of reference for the project. Responses to the themes raised by the NCVER were fairly consistent across States and Territories. Differences were more pronounced between providers who are part of the public VET system and those who lie outside that scope. Within the public, formally funded part of the sector, differences revolved around whether or not the provider's core business was the delivery of adult and community education, broadly defined. These differences were not pronounced and there was broad consistency in responses given the mix and diversity of providers.

In the *Key Performance Indicators for Adult Community Education* report, the authors noted that the development and implementation of KPIs for the ACE sector would depend on the availability of relevant information in key areas, namely inputs, processes, outputs and outcomes. In the publicly funded VET sector, information about inputs and outputs is obtained from the national collections of provider and financial data, while information about outcomes is obtained from the annual student outcomes survey and the biennial employer satisfaction survey. A limited set of information about VET processes can be obtained from both the VET provider collection and the student outcomes survey.

The NCVER was asked to identify gaps in data elements collected nationally, particularly as it relates to the development of KPIs for the ACE sector and noting that any data collection regime needs to collect information on outputs as well as inputs. In doing so, the NCVER canvassed;

- Providers' experience of current data collection arrangements
- The utility of data collected currently to providers
- Gaps in information collected
- The extent and kind of data used by providers locally
- The possible impact of determinations in relation to ACE of the GST.

Before exploring these issues further it is important to note that data quality in adult and community education has improved enormously since its introduction to the national VET data collection in 1996. Further, the need for data collection is generally accepted by States/Territories, umbrella organisations and providers as important for recognising the magnitude of the contribution which the ACE sector makes to education, training and lifelong learning. Where ACE providers receive funds from government VET allocations or other public sources, data collection also serves as an important accountability and quality assurance tool. Many providers also noted the need for or usefulness of statistical information for the purposes of market research, program development and promotion.

Nevertheless, providers (both those within the current collection arrangements and those outside it) reported a number of continuing concerns. These are described briefly below.

3.1 Providers experience of current collection arrangements

As noted earlier, not all providers fall within the scope of current collection arrangements. The issues noted here are those raised in large part by providers who report to the NCVER, most, if not all of whom are community not-for-profit agencies.

Reporting to the AVETMIS Standard still presents difficulties to some providers, particularly small providers. This varies between States/Territories depending on how long reporting arrangements have been in place and what arrangements exist at the state government level.

The AVETMIS Standard was designed to collect comprehensive, consistent and comparable information in vocational education and training nationally. Many providers in adult and community education reported continuing difficulties in providing information to this level of detail.

Providers expressed concern at the costs incurred by a data reporting mechanism designed for use in the VET sector, even with a reduced or simplified set of data elements. Some providers reported employing additional staff to compile data requested. Despite the difficulties raised, most providers indicated that they would cooperate in some kind of data collection provided adequate funds were made available. In addition, many providers reported seeing no value in the information collected as it was not made available to them in a way they could use and understand. If they could see the 'reward' as one provider termed it, in having the information given back in a usable format there would be a greater appetite for collection.

Particular difficulties were also cited in relation to collecting full demographic details from clients in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status and other demographic characteristics, especially information on prior levels of education. This arose for a number of reasons including client reluctance to reveal information because of perceived embarrassment, resentment at the time such processes entail where clients are enrolled in very short programs of no more than a couple of hours duration, and a perception that such information would be used against them at such future date.

Further, the mechanics of collecting data to the Standard are still causing difficulties. Specifically, the lack of responsiveness of software providers to the needs of small users was raised repeatedly as an issue. Information systems are still under development, and finding software that is AVETMISS compliant in particular appears to be a barrier to reporting and using data effectively at the local level.

3.2 The utility of data collected to providers

As noted above, where providers are reporting to State Training Authorities (or other government agencies requiring such information), it appears that this information is seldom fed back to them for their own use. The information is therefore perceived largely as an imposition to ensure funding rather than a tool in management or planning. There was difference in opinion on this issue depending on whether providers had a commercial or advocacy role and what their core business was. That is, where a provider was part of a formally funded system, they were more likely to be sympathetic to the need for data collection.

Market information or market intelligence was seen by all (regardless of their funding status) as more valuable than enrolment, provider and organisational data.

Information and measures about client satisfaction, and the outputs and outcomes of ACE, are central to the KPI approach. From the consultations it was found that the majority if not all providers undertook customer satisfaction/ course evaluation feed-back. This kind of

information, including what students gained from their course, where they went on completion, what they thought of the course and where they found out about the course were seen as critical to the viability of the organisation. There was also interest in assessing and evaluating the learner's experience of the course. Instruments for collecting this information vary where they exist and are largely self-administered in class or face-to-face.

Although there is considerable interest in a student outcomes survey (SOS) of some kind, the current survey administered by the NCVER is not seen as user-friendly given length (the survey takes half an hour to complete), complexity and time after student left course. Providers were concerned that outcomes be seen in a broader context of achievement than that relating solely to employment objectives and outcomes. There was a general perception that the current SOS, and current thinking in terms of outcomes in general, focussed largely if not exclusively on employment related outcomes, with too little attention given to affective outcomes such as personal development or pathways to other education or training activities. In such a framework, it was felt, issues of improved life chances in terms of self-confidence and the capacity to cope with life and work in general were overlooked.

A related issue was the logistical difficulties of collecting any further information once a client has left the course or program.

It should be noted that the NCVER, on behalf of ANTA, is currently developing a do-it-yourself student outcomes survey for use by providers who wish to administer their own survey and compare the results with national KPIs. This survey will contain a core set of information which is nationally consistent, but the survey can also be augmented or customised to meet the needs of a provider. The NCVER considers that this approach has potential utility for the ACE sector.

3.3 Measuring objectives of adult and community education including quality and diversity

The *ACE National Policy* considers issues relating to 'quality' and identifies the value-added role that ACE plays in the national training system. A central outcome for this objective is that quantifiable data on the ACE sector's involvement in the VET system will be available. We asked what steps needed to be taken to enhance this objective. Strategic Objective 6 from the *ACE National Policy* relates to fostering inclusiveness in the ACE sector. We asked the question, to what extent can a national data collection system, which measures patterns of participation and non-participation across equity groups in ACE, contribute to this goal?

In many instances providers were not familiar with the objectives of the national adult and community education strategy. Obviously, where providers were part of the government-funded system there was greater familiarity. Most providers shared the view that the broader goals of quality and diversity were important despite the difficulties experienced in trying to capture information on these goals.

Capturing the contribution of adult and community education to the national training system is possible within the current collection parameters, many providers, however, saw this as incidental to the main information requirements of the sector. There were relatively few suggestions as to how this information might be enhanced. Also, the current approach to information about the ACE sector was questioned by some provider representatives as not giving sufficient attention to the affective outcomes of ACE.

Providers consulted felt that any information collection arrangement should attempt to capture the outcomes in terms of the social and personal impact of adult and community education as well as vocational and employment related outcomes. Many felt that their own evaluation

processes captured this information already, albeit the information was more likely to be qualitative than quantitative.

It was also apparent that many providers, again mostly those outside the current funding arrangements, were unaware of the strategic objectives identified at the national level.

3.4 Gaps in information collected

Gaps in the information currently collected preclude the development of national KPIs for ACE, or the production of a national report on the outputs and outcomes of ACE, all of which are seen as important priorities for ACE by MCEETYA and ANTA. On the other hand, the amount of detail which is collected currently is already seen by many in the ACE sector as adequate if not onerous.

The exception to this as noted above is 'market intelligence'. Gaps in information identified here included;

- socio-economic information relating to clients
- whether clients were returning or repeat custom
- mode of transport to and from course
- what goals and outcomes had been achieved through training
- pathways before and after experience in adult and community education
- retention or information
- sources of information about adult and community education
- local and regional level information, both about existing clients and potential clients.

Again, the overriding theme and preoccupation of providers is not with KPIs as such but around positioning themselves in the market so as to be able to meet the needs of current and future users of their services. When pressed on how such information should be collected, most providers were less confident that there were any easy solutions. Most reported that they would not be able to do so without specific resources to do so.

From the point of view of current collection arrangements for in-scope providers, the NCVER is satisfied that there has been a concerted effort to improve data collected. Data most commonly not reported or reported incorrectly from adult and community providers relates largely to classification and coding issues at the provider level, to specific data elements not being collected (for example, indigenous status, employment, prior education, disability information), the distinction between courses and modules, and the reporting of completed qualifications. The availability of improved software for use by small providers has ameliorated the situation to some extent, but there is still some way to go in this area, particularly if data are required to support national KPIs as foreshadowed.

3.5 Goods and Services Tax

Because of the possible impact of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) on provision of adult and community education, the Reference Group for the project asked the NCVER to canvass this as an issue during consultations.

At the time of the project consultations a determination had been drafted and was before the federal Minister of Education, Training and Youth Affairs, State and Territory training authorities and the MCEETYA ACE Taskforce. This determination was designed to provide the

guidelines for determining whether an activity can be considered GST liable or exempt. The likely scenario was that for GST exemption, an activity must be:

- an ACE course
- likely to add to employment-related skills.

The GST-free definition may become a boundary within the ACE sector and is likely to have an impact over time on the programs which are offered by providers or accessed by students. The impact of the GST was reported by some States/Territories only as an area where work has commenced in terms of assessing the impact on the ATO ruling noted above. There appears to have been little or no attempt to classify or categorise either all providers or those currently in receipt of funds from States/Territories in terms of this determination.

However, most providers themselves were examining the application. Most if not all providers consulted were in the process of establishing a GST exempt status on all or most of their activities, particularly where revenue bases were small. It was felt that some providers may go out of business because of the additional administrative load generated by the GST arrangements.

Since the project consultations, the determination has been tabled in the House of Representatives and the Senate. Under this determination and the GST legislation, the Minister for Employment, Training and Youth Affairs has the responsibility for deciding which courses will be GST free. The GST legislation requires that courses must 'be likely to add to the employment related skills of people undertaking the course' in order to be GST free. A series of tests has been formulated to establish whether an ACE course meets this criterion. The tests are to be applied independently of the subjective intentions of the providers of the course or the recipients. The ruling states, *inter alia*, that:

A course will 'add' to the employment related skills if the intended outcome of the course is to develop, increase, advance or improve the employment related skills of the people undertaking the course. This includes gaining basic skills such as literacy and numeracy, building upon existing skills and developing skills in new areas.

and also, that:

Hobby and recreational courses are not likely to add to the employment related skills of people undertaking the course.

From http://law.ato.gov.au/atolaw

The upshot of the ruling is that some ACE courses will be GST free and some will attract GST. Agreement has been reached to delegate the authority to determine the GST status of courses to the State and Territory ministers with responsibility for education and training.

4. Feasibility and costs of expanding current collection requirements

The Committee asked the NCVER to consider the feasibility and costs of expanding the current collection requirements.

Because of the current uneven development of information arrangements for adult and community education, we consider there is a need for some additional information about adult and community education nationally. In order to meet the needs of users and allow for the possibility of a limited set of KPIs, this information needs to be broader in scope than is collected at present, but limited in depth in comparison with what is collected for the public VET system. This is underlined by the current review of the national strategy underway under the auspice of MCEETYA Adult and Community Education Taskforce and indeed, the variable depth and scope of quantitative information revealed through this project.

However, in looking at whether or not to extend the current scope of the collection it is important to consider both the need for and likely reception to, extending the scope to adult and community providers not in receipt of public vocational education and training funds. The level of detail currently collected for publicly funded VET is clearly the outer limit for ACE-sector activity. In fact, the NCVER suggests that the requirements for a limited set of national KPIs could be met by collecting information in considerably less detail than applies to VET.

The research that the NCVER undertook as part of this project, including gathering information from State and Territory Training Authorities on current arrangements and consultations in all States, shows a tension between what would be the ideal and what is achievable in practice. On the one hand, many providers and ACE stakeholders would value information on ACE-sector activity and outcomes at the local, State/Territory and national levels. On the other hand, there is only a limited appetite for expanding the collection of information on adult and community education beyond its current scope because of the burden and costs of information collection. This concern applies particularly to a detailed, unit-record collection of information as applies in the public VET and higher education sectors, which in ACE would be overkill.

These views may in part reflect the structural arrangements at the State/Territory level where most policy and planning in relation to ACE is undertaken through training agencies. The role of State Training Authorities in managing and funding vocational education and training is clearly the main focus, although it is evident that all States/Territories maintain a commitment to adult and community education to varying extents.

The other issue which continues to confound efforts at collecting and reporting both more and better information, is the issue of the scope and boundary of adult and community education. The lack of definition makes it difficult to establish regular and comparable data. By the same token, imposing a definition for collection purposes may not be helpful both in terms of the burden of collection it imposes on small independent providers and by the very fact that any definition will exclude some activity that could claim to be adult and community learning at the very broadest level. For example, the scope of ACE could be defined in terms of organisations for whom the delivery of ACE programs is the primary or a major part of their business. However, this would then exclude organisations such as those in the health and community services sector, and cultural centres, which from the project consultations are clearly important providers of ACE programs.

In our view, additional information on adult and community education is needed only in very broad terms and at the national level only. We do not think a regular provider or organisational collection is either warranted or feasible without considerable and somewhat daunting additional resources. In looking at this question, we also considered that any additional, limited collection should be confined to the delivery of education and training by community-based and not-for-profit agencies.

In relation to collecting outcomes information, broadly defined, for KPI and other purposes, there are both more compelling arguments for proceeding and greater hope for instituting arrangements which would yield good information and be of benefit to providers and their clients.

These are outlined in more detail below.

4.1 Collection requirements for providers in receipt of public vocational education and training funds

As described elsewhere in this report, the current scope and data collection requirements for adult and community education are determined by whether or not the provider is in receipt of public funds for the provision of vocational education and training. In other words, at the national level, the addition of adult and community education is only there in so far as it relates to the delivery of publicly-funded VET, although the situation is somewhat different in NSW and Victoria, where BACE and ACFEB have instituted State collection arrangements.

This applies equally to TAFE colleges providing personal enrichment, recreation and leisure courses and to adult and community providers providing vocational education and training. In effect it applies in large part to the 'formal' delivery of specifically vocational education as a tool for accountability and performance improvement. Information about personal enrichment programs finds its way into the collection only where it is delivered by in essence, TAFE or other providers receiving State/Territory or Commonwealth recurrent or specific purpose allocations for VET.

Arrangements for data collection are now well understood in all states and by most providers so funded. There are exceptions to this. Because ACE is a contestable market both in terms of public VET allocations and clients, providers move in and out of the system and are not always well equipped to undertake the reporting tasks required of them, particularly where they are funded for one calendar year at a time.

Nevertheless, the NCVER is of the view that where a provider is in receipt of funds for vocational education and training, it is incumbent upon the provider to comply with the same terms and conditions of accountability as applies to other providers in the sector.

- *We recommend that the current arrangements be retained for all publicly funded providers of VET in Australia including full compliance with the AVETMIS Standard.*
- *We recommend that NCVER investigate the possibility of developing an ACE specific publication in the future.*
- *This is cost neutral.*

Where a provider in receipt of State/Territory or Commonwealth recurrent or specific purpose allocations for VET is providing non-vocational education or training, i.e. a TAFE college or other organisation providing recreation, leisure and personal enrichment courses, there is an argument for collecting a reduced amount of information.

- *We recommend that the issue of reporting and/or collecting a reduced amount of information in relation to personal and recreational programs be considered by the National Training Statistics Committee.*
- *This is cost neutral.*

4.2 Proposed collection requirements for providers not in receipt of public vocational education and training funds

Our consultations showed a network of independent and autonomous organisations with a myriad of funding and reporting arrangements in place already. Our research has put together quantitative information from a range of sources in scoping the extent of the sector in very broad terms. Consultations also show that such providers, in our view, would not be able to collect information which is comparable in quality or scope to the AVETMIS Standard.

Any information collected would be likely to suffer from the defects of lack of comparability, accuracy and depth which would limit its usefulness except as an estimate of the quantum of activity currently taking place. Its utility for research, management or planning would be reduced. The most that could reasonably be expected is basic information relating to the number of participants and summary information about the ACE programs they undertake. On this basis, it might be possible to institute a scaled down collection of basic, key pieces of information. We suggest that such arrangements would only be feasible with the cooperation and support of the organisations which represent ACE providers, and with a resolution of the scope issues discussed previously.

However, NCVER's experience of introducing (or attempting to introduce) scaled down collection requirements on a reduced and voluntary basis does not give us great confidence in this as a strategy. In 1999, the NCVER on behalf of the National Training Statistics Committee pilot-tested collecting some core information from registered training organisations not in receipt of public funds through a trial questionnaire and focus groups. The results led us to recommend against collecting such information from providers. Instead, the NCVER recommended adding a question to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) household survey thus eliciting information straight from the client rather than the provider.

In relation to the adult and community education sector, difficulties remain. It may be difficult to define the type of activity or provision the client needed to have been engaged in and formulate a question for the survey accordingly. Nevertheless:

- *We recommend that ANTA and the National Training Statistics Committee pursue with the ABS the feasibility of collecting more information about participation in ACE through the ABS education and training survey or other relevant instruments.*
- ***Cost**: The cost of this could be expected to be in the range of $50 000 — $100 000.*

The current scope of ACE activity, and the scope of existing reporting, has been established through the present project. However, this scope may change over time as a result of factors such as the GST and demographic changes. Therefore:

- *We recommend that information on and by ACE providers be collected as a scoping exercise similar to this project every three to five years. Such a process would be greatly assisted if Adult and*

Community Education advisory bodies in States and Territories held registers of adult and community providers in their states and updated these on a regular basis.

- ***Cost**: Approximately $100,000 every three to five years in additional funding.*

In relation to students and programs, we suggest that information is not needed at the unit record level but only in very aggregate terms from providers. If the collection of such aggregate data were to be pursued and to include providers not in receipt of State/Territory or Commonwealth recurrent or specific purpose allocations for VET, a scaled-down national collection based upon a small set of data elements could be explored. Given the feedback from the project consultations, data elements in this aggregate collection should cover

- basic student profiles (age, sex, equity groups);
- some enrolment information (fields of study or discipline groups); and
- information on intent, outcomes (including affective outcomes) and/or customer satisfaction.

We also advocate adding identifiers for ACE funding avenues to the above list of data elements since this information, if validated, can provide relevant input into public planning and management processes. Even though aggregation of data at provider level avoids problems relating to the collecting, administering and updating of huge amounts of single records, information contained in an aggregate data collection is only useful if data validity and quality can be ensured. Therefore the feasibility of putting in place a process of quality audits or quality checks on subsets of the data, should be investigated. Further, issues on how to deal with and support providers with limited resources to collect and report on performance data have to be addressed.

- *In order to assess the feasibility of a collection of summary statistical information from all ACE providers, we recommend conducting a pilot project on establishing an aggregated, provider-level ACE data collection with a diverse cross-section of ACE providers, and not just those in receipt of public funds, to test the efficacy and restrictions of such an approach. The pilot project would not need to cover providers already included in existing data collection arrangements, such as BACE providers in NSW and ACFEB providers in Victoria.*
- ***Cost**: approximately $50 000 for designing data collection and data validation process, conducting pilot project, evaluating feasibility and estimating costs for national aggregate data collection. Costs highly depend on the extent of pilot project.*

4.3 Customer satisfaction and outcomes information

The area, which holds out greatest hopes of improved information as well as assisting the development of KPIs, performance improvement and local management, is in our view, the area of customer satisfaction and outcomes surveys. This would avoid the necessity for annual returns from providers or organisations and the concomitant costs associated at all levels of collection and reporting.

We are also of the view that the collection of such information is in line with current directions in other areas of education delivery and indeed service delivery more generally. There will, of course be areas of specific interest to adult and community education which would need special consideration. In particular, the need to establish a broader set of outcomes resulting from learner's experiences of adult and community education.

We suggest that the utility of such information would again be greatly enhanced if the scope of any such developmental work and collection were confined to the delivery of education and training through community-based not-for-profit agencies.

In looking at the question of surveys, the NCVER considered the possibility of adding additional questions to either the ABS household surveys or survey of training and education. We rejected these on the grounds that finding a succinct definition of the kind of provision in order to be able to question respondents would prove too difficult.

However, it would be relatively easy to develop a common survey instrument for use by providers locally, in addition to providing electronic web-based tools for analysis at the local level. The NCVER, on behalf of ANTA and the National Training Statistics Committee, is in the process of developing such tools for use by vocational education and training providers. This includes a do-it-yourself student outcomes survey for use by providers who wish to administer their own survey and compare the results with national KPIs. This survey will contain a core set of information which is nationally consistent, but it can also be augmented or customised to meet the needs of a provider. The NCVER considers that this approach has potential utility for the ACE sector.

- *We recommend that common, do-it-yourself survey tools be developed for use by adult and community education providers in line with current development of a standard national do-it-yourself surveys with capacity for local customisation for use within VET, including the use of electronic tools for data analysis*
- ***Cost**: this would be at marginal cost or cost neutral, as there is an existing developmental project within the survey program for vocational education and training.*
- *As an extension to provide a national perspective for KPI purposes, the feasibility of extending the survey to a sample of ACE providers to provide reliable information on outcomes should be explored with peak ACE organisations.*
- ***Extension cost**: The final cost will depend on sample size and logistics, but could be expected to be approximately $50 000.*

We also considered expanding the existing NCVER surveys of VET student outcomes and employers both in terms of sample population and scope of the survey instrument. We also rejected these possibilities. The NCVER's experience with administering the current survey of student outcomes within the VET funded scope of delivery has not been such to give us great confidence in expanding this further. To date the NCVER has not considered information collected through this mechanism usable because of low response rates.

There would be significant costs involved in designing a survey which would yield useful information of community based adult education providers. Nevertheless this would be possible if:

- Providers were willing to take part
- Sufficient training and assistance were possible
- A targeted rather than 'scatter-gun' approach was adopted to sampling providers
- Provider saw value in having KPI information available to provide national benchmarks for their performance.

A possible option if this approach was adopted would be to survey a representative sample of ACE providers on an occasional basis (i.e) every 2-3 years.

Appendix 1

Differing views of adult and community education (ACE)

The following list shows a few examples of definitions of 'ACE', some of which are mutually exclusive:

- 'ACE' is both informal and formal learning delivered to the community by the community in ways that best suits the participants
- 'ACE' is an activity oriented toward lifelong learning and relates to the recurrent vocational, personal, cultural and social development of people in the community. It involves complex but coherent forms of co-operative learning
- 'ACE' provides learning opportunities for adults in the broad areas of general, vocational, basic and community education and is provided by independent, non-government, non-profit, community-owned and managed organisations
- 'ACE' has a major focus on providing educational programs to meet the needs of Australian adults. It serves, is managed by and responsive to the community. It is not delivered by TAFE institutes, universities, commercial providers or industry providers
- 'ACE' is non-accredited, personal enrichment activity offered by TAFE colleges and a range of other formal or less formal learning initiatives.

'ACE' can also cover a wide and diverse array of providers for whom adult and community education is not necessarily the core business. These include organisations providing programs and services in the areas of health, welfare, culture, the arts and employment services as well as migrant settlement programs and individual enterprises.

Appendix 2

Technical notes on ACE data in the national VET data collection

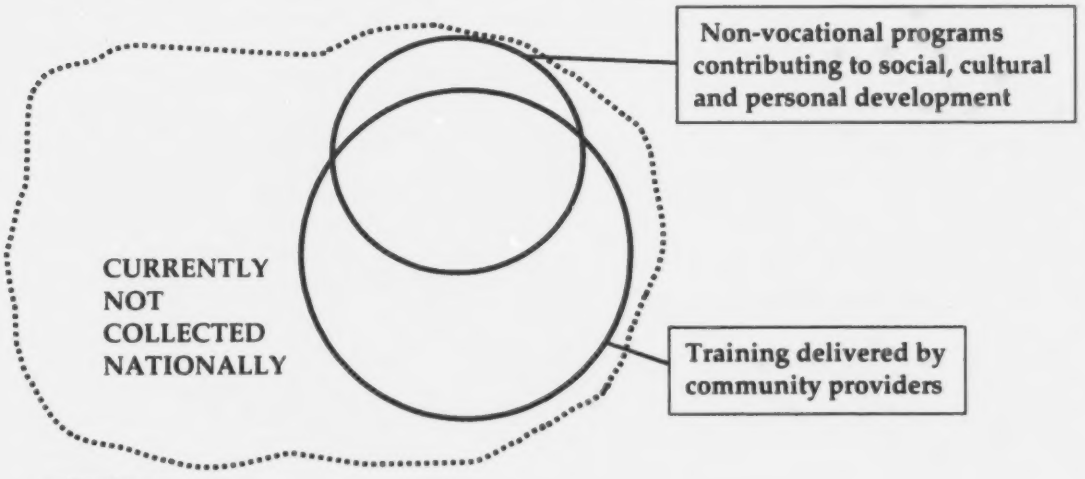
Since the national VET data collection complies with the Australian Vocational Education and Training Management Information System Standard (AVETMISS), it is relatively easy to extract data on ACE (in accordance with the definition noted in section 2.1 of the report). ACE as reported to the national VET database can be identified as:

1. All vocational and non-vocational training activity delivered by community providers. Here "community providers" are all providers who report through representative bodies for ACE such as BACE in NSW or ACFE in Victoria or identify themselves as Adult Education Centres or Community Access Centres;

AND

2. All activity delivered by non-community providers in recreation, leisure and personal enrichment ('stream-1000') programs

Figure 1: Schematic illustration of ACE activity from perspective of national VET data collection


Non-vocational programs contributing to social, cultural and personal development
CURRENTLY NOT COLLECTED NATIONALLY
Training delivered by community providers

It should be emphasised that the figures reported below do not reflect the activity in the whole ACE sector. Although most of the accredited vocational programs, and a majority of the vocational activity delivered in an informal context are covered, the data presented here are not at all complete. An attempt to estimate the size of the whole ACE sector is presented in Appendix 3.

In 1998, 582 000 students, or 31.1%, of the students for whom training activity had been reported to the national VET provider data collection, participated in some kind of adult and community education. These students were enrolled either with community providers or in personal enrichment programs or both. Students aged 15 years or more (99.2% of the ACE students) represented 3.9% of Australia's 1998 population of age 15 years or more.

ACE activity accounted for more than 21.2 million training hours in 1998 representing 6.6% of the total annual hours reported to the national VET database. Training associated with Australia's ACE sector and reported to the collection has been delivered by almost 940 training providers.

Between 1996 and 1998,

- the number of students apparently declined by 4.8% from 611 600 to 582 000 in 1998,
- the hours of training increased by 2.5% from 21.70 million to 21.21 million hours,
- the number of module enrolments grew by 12.7% from 867 700 to 932 400, and
- the number of course enrolments decreased by 2.9% from 817 600 to 793 600.

Even though this trend, to some extend, may be explained by community providers offering more VET in 1998 than in 1996, one should not ignore that parts of the data on ACE are merely reported to the national VET data collection on a voluntary basis. The scope for the data reported here therefore undergoes some fluctuations, and it is fair to state that ACE activity as reported to the national data collection remained fairly steady in the two years under consideration.

Of the 582 000 students undertaking ACE in 1998,

- 70.6% were female and 29.4% male
- 50% were older than 38.5 years indicating that ACE students, on average, are significantly older than students participating in other post-compulsory education (Median age of VET students: 28.4 years; of students in higher education: 21.8 years; of apprentices and trainees: 20.4 years).
- 22.3% undertook formal VET and 20.7% informal VET. 61.5% were enrolled in personal enrichment programs (Table 1)
- 81.7% were enrolled with community providers and 18.3% with other providers (TAFE institutes, universities etc.)

Typically, ACE students enrolled in recreational programs are more likely to be female and older than those enrolled in vocational programs. They tend to undertake very short programs.

Table 1: ACE activity by program type

Program type	Students (%)	Annual Hours (%)
Formal VET	22.3	46.6
Informal VET	20.7	14.7
Total VET	41.7	61.3
Personal enrichment	61.5	38.7
Total (%)	100.0	100.0
Total	**582 000**	**21.21 million**

Note: The student column adds to more than 100% since some students undertake courses belonging to more than one program type.

Of the 21.21 million annual hours:

- 62.6% were funded from recurrent Commonwealth and State/Territory allocations for VET, 3.5% from specific public allocations for VET and 27.0% on a fee-for-service basis. For 6.9% of annual hours the source of funding was unknown.
- almost half (46.6%) were delivered in accredited VET courses, 14.7% in informal VET programs and 38.7% in personal enrichment programs,
- 90.0% were delivered at almost 690 community provider locations and 10.0% at 250 locations of other providers.

While in Tasmania, Victoria and New South Wales nationally reported ACE participation rates for 15 to 100 year olds are in the order of 5% or above, those rates are as low as one percent or lower for the two Australian territories (see Table 2). Since the results of the consultation rounds did not indicate such a large divergence in ACE participation patterns across States/Territories it is fair to conclude that reporting of ACE activity to the national VET data collection varies quite immensely from State/Territory to State/Territory.

Table 2: State/Territory activity in adult and community education

State/ Territory	ACT	New South Wales	Northern Territory	Queensland	South Australia	Tasmania	Victoria	Western Australia	Australia
Students	600	251,600	1,400	42,900	28,200	22,100	203,200	32,000	582,000
% population (over 15 year olds)	0.3	4.9	1.0	1.6	2.4	5.9	5.4	2.2	3.9
Annual hours ('000)	22	6,681	133	712	583	792	11,349	935	21,208
Training providers	16	155	16	103	2	42	525	75	936

Accredited vocational ACE activity

Formal vocational education and training is training activity in the formal setting of vocational programs which can lead to qualifications accredited under the Australian Qualification Framework (AQF) or the outdated Register of Awards in Tertiary Education, or can result in the issuing of certificates of competency or proficiency, statements of attainment or endorsements to certificates.

Figure 2: Cumulative age distribution of ACE students by program type

In Australia's ACE sector the provision of formal programs with vocational intent experienced significant growth over the past two years. While in 1996 about 90 500 ACE students undertook formal VET programs, this number grew by 43.3% to 129 600 students in 1998. Similarly, annual hours increased from 5.20 million in 1996 by 90.4% to 9.89 million., and module enrolments more than doubled (1996: 125 000, 1998: 311 500).

Along with this increase ACE activity in informal VET and personal enrichment programs declined (see next sections). Therefore some of the increased formal VET activity in the ACE sector is very likely due to former informal VET and recreational programs having become accredited VET courses.

Of the 129 600 ACE students participating in formal VET programs in 1998,

- about two-thirds (66.2%) were female and one-third male (Figure 3).
- one quarter were younger than 27.2 years, half were younger than 37.1 years and one quarter was older than 47.1 years (Figure 2).
- 45.5% were employed, 11.9% unemployed and 10.2% not in the labour force (Table 3)[15].

[15] The quality of data on the employment status of ACE students is fairly poor with very high levels of missing data (Table 3). Therefore the figures provided should be interpreted very carefully.

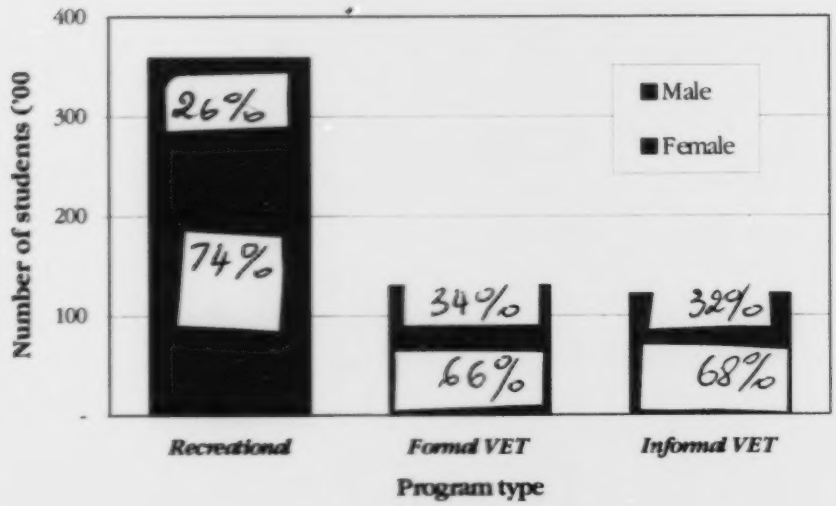
Table 3: Employment status of ACE students by program type, 1998

	Formal VET (%)	Informal VET (%)	Non-vocational (%)	Total (%)
Employed	45.5	30.9	32.8	35.0
Unemployed	11.9	5.9	2.9	5.3
Not in labour force	10.2	11.4	9.3	9.7
Unknown labour force status	32.4	51.8	55.0	50.1
Total (%)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total ('000)	129.6	120.8	358.2	582.0

Most of the annual hours were publicly funded (96.2%). Only 2.7% were funded on a fee-for-service basis (unknowns: 1.1%).

57.0% of annual hours (57.8% of module enrolments) resulted in a successful outcome. This percentage is anticipated to be higher since for 18.4% of annual hours (24.1% of module enrolments) the outcome is unknown.

Figure 3: ACE numbers by sex and program type



On average, ACE students enrolled in formal VET courses undertook 76 hours in 1998, significantly less than the average number of hours undertaken by students in the whole publicly-funded VET sector (204 hours per student).

More than half (51.7%) of students were enrolled in courses that entitle to statements of attainment, certificates of competency or proficiency, or endorsements to certificates (Table 2). These students accounted for 22.2% of annual hours in this part of Australia's ACE sector.

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AQF-II qualifications were undertaken by one-fifth of the students accounting for 26.4% of annual hours.

Table 2: Participation of ACE students in formal VET programs by qualification

Qualification	Students (%)	Course enrolments (%)	Module enrolments (%)	Annual hours (%)
AQF secondary	1.0	0.8	0.8	3.0
AQF I	8.5	7.9	9.7	14.6
AQF II	20.0	20.0	27.1	26.4
AQF III or equivalent	6.4	6.5	13.8	13.1
AQF IV or equivalent	3.9	3.3	7.6	8.6
AQF Diploma, equivalent or above	1.0	0.8	1.4	2.1
AQF - other	14.1	11.6	9.7	10.0
Other qualifications	51.7	49.0	29.8	22.2
Total	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

The fields of study in formal VET programs with the most enrolled ACE students and most annual hours were:

- VET multi-field education (27.1% of students, 43.7% of annual hours), ie. courses which often provide foundation for further study in more specialised vocational fields
- Business and administration (22.6% of students, 18.2% of annual hours)
- Science (17.5% of students, 4.3% of annual hours)
- Health and community services (12.1% of students, 11.9% of annual hours)
- Arts and humanities (12.1% of students, 6.5% of annual hours)

The areas of learning in formal VET courses with most of the enrolled ACE students and annual hours were:

- Mathematics and computing (34.1% of students, 11.7% of annual hours)
- Social, educational and employment skills (24.2% of students, 38.0% of annual hours)
- Administration, business, economics and law (15.9% of students, 13.7% of annual hours)
- Humanities (15.9% of students, 9.4% of annual hours)
- Health sciences (14.9% of students, 10.9% of annual hours)

Informal vocational ACE activity

Informal vocational education is all non-award vocational activity as well as activity resulting from module-only enrolments.

While the participation of ACE students in informal vocational training activity remained fairly steady over the past two years (1996: 123 700 students and 171 200 module enrolments, 1998: 120 800 students and 165 500 module enrolments), annual hours dropped quite significantly from 5.32 million hours in 1996 by 41.6% to 3.11 million in 1998.

Of the 120 800 ACE students participating in informal VET programs in 1998,

- more than two-thirds (68.1%) were female and less than one-third male (Figure 3).
- one quarter were younger than 28.5 years, half were younger than 38.4 years and one quarter was older than 49.7 years (Figure 2). This indicates that ACE students enrolled in informal VET programs on average are slightly older than those enrolled in formal VET programs.
- 30.9% were employed, 5.9% unemployed and 11.4% not in the labour force (Table 3)[16].

ACE students enrolled in informal VET programs, on average, undertook 26 hours in 1998, about one-third of the training load of ACE students in formal VET programs.

Almost three-quarters of the annual hours were publicly funded (73.7%), the remaining quarter (24.5%) on a fee-for-service basis (unknowns: 1.8%).

51.8% of annual hours (38.7% of module enrolments) resulted in a successful outcome. Caution should be exercised when interpreting this figure since for 43.4% of annual hours (59.6% of module enrolments) the outcome is unknown.

The fields of study in informal VET programs with the most enrolled ACE students and most annual hours were:

- VET multi-field education (29.9% of students, 42.9% of annual hours), ie. courses which often provide foundation for further study in more specialised vocational fields
- Science (17.0% of students, 10.0% of annual hours)
- Arts and humanities (16.3% of students, 18.3% of annual hours)
- Business and administration (11.4% of students, 8.6% of annual hours)

The areas of learning in informal VET programs with most enrolled ACE students and annual hours were:

- Mathematics and computing (26.8% of students, 15.7% of annual hours)
- Social, educational and employment skills (23.0% of students, 35.7% of annual hours)
- Humanities (16.2% of students, 17.7% of annual hours)
- Administration, business, economics and law (11.2% of students, 7.6% of annual hours)
- Visual and performing arts (10.5% of students, 9.7% of annual hours)

[16] The quality of data on the employment status of ACE students is fairly poor with very high levels of missing data (see Table 3). Therefore the figures provided should be interpreted very carefully.

Non-vocational ACE activity[17]

Here all activity classified as "stream-1000", ie. leisure, recreation and personal enrichment activity is considered non-vocational. The classification is based on the curricular intent and does not take into account the personal intent of the student which may as well be vocational.

Participation of ACE students in non-vocational training activity dropped over the past two years (1996: 426 300 students and 9.25 million annual hours, 1998: 358 200 students and 8.21 million annual hours). It should be noted, however, that parts of this decline is due to reclassification of what constitutes "recreational" and what "vocational". Some of the drop may be attributed to fluctuations in the scope of the collected data, an effect that can be expected for data mainly reported on a voluntary basis.

Of the 358 200 ACE students participating in personal enrichment programs in 1998,

- About three-quarters (73.4%) were female and the remaining quarter male (Figure 3)
- one quarter were younger than 29.0 years, half were younger than 39.3 years and one quarter was older than 50.8 years (Figure 2). This indicates that ACE students undertaking recreational and personal enrichment training on average are older than those enrolled in VET programs.
- 70.3% were enrolled with community providers and 29.7% with other providers
- 32.8% were employed, 2.9% unemployed and 9.3% not in the labour force (Table 3)[18].

ACE students in personal enrichment programs, on average, undertook 23 hours in 1998, slightly less than ACE students in informal VET programs (26 hours).

More than half of the annual hours were funded on a fee-for-service basis (57.3%) while only one quarter (26.9%) were publicly funded. For the remaining annual hours (15.8%) the source of funding is unknown.

33.9% of annual hours (32.1% of module enrolments) resulted in a successful outcome. However, this low success rate should be treated with caution since for 63.0% of annual hours (65.6% of module enrolments) the outcome is unknown.

The fields of study in personal enrichment programs with the most enrolled students and the most annual hours were:

- Art, humanities, social sciences (34.1% of students, 41.0% of annual hours) including popular courses such as "crafts", "art", "pottery", "calligraphy", "music dance and drama", "photography, "belly dancing" and others
- Health, community services (19.5% of students, 18.6% of annual hours) including popular courses such as "yoga", "health and wellbeing", "massage", "tai chi", "golf", "meditation" and others
- VET multi-field education (19.3% of students, 20.8% of annual hours), ie. courses that often provide foundation for further study in more specialised vocational fields.

[17] A detailed statistical analysis of the non-vocational ACE sector can be found in NCVER's publication *Australian Personal Enrichment Education and Training Programs Statistics 1998: an overview.*

[18] The quality of data on the employment status of ACE students is fairly poor with very high levels of missing data (see Table 3). Therefore the figures provided should be interpreted very carefully.

The areas of learning in personal enrichment programs with most of the enrolled students and annual hours were:

- Hospitality, tourism and personal services (42.0% of students, 35.0% of annual hours)
- Visual/Performing arts (24.4% of students, 24.1% of annual hours)
- Humanities (8.4% of students, 7.9% of annual hours)
- Education (7.0% of students, 11.8% of annual hours)

Appendix 3

Estimating the total level of ACE activity

As already mentioned (Appendix 2) the national VET data collection does not contain complete data on adult and community education in Australia. There exist quite significant gaps, in particular in that part of ACE delivered by community organisations or groups for whom education or training is not the core business.

However, the information on vocational education and training delivered in communities by community based and community-managed organisations is fairly comprehensive with approximately 95% to 99% of accredited VET reported to the national data base. Since formal VET involves longer courses and multi-enrolments with training loads, as measured in terms of annual hours per student, on average being three to ten times higher than the training loads in informal or recreational programs, NCVER estimates that the national VET data collection contains information on slightly more than three-quarters of the annual hours delivered in Australia's ACE sector.

In the following, some estimates for missing data are provided.

- Training activity delivered by Universities of the Third Age and Schools for Seniors experienced dramatic growth in the past five years with currently more than 140 universities and schools in Australia and U3A membership numbers at around 43 000 to 45 000 (as at June 2000). The national VET data collection only contains ACE activity delivered at 24 U3A's in Victoria accounting for approximately 5 000 students. The preliminary results of the Tasmanian ACE mapping project indicate that U3A members, on average, undertake slightly more than five hours of ACE per year. Therefore NCVER estimates that the missing data associated with U3A activity accounts for approximately 40 000 students and 120 000 to 150 000 annual hours currently not reported to the national data collection
- Activity provided by Neighbourhood Houses, Community Adult Education Centres and Community Learning Centres which is not reported to the national VET data collection account for approximately 120 000 to 150 000 students and about 500 000 to 600 000 hours of training nation-wide. This indicates that the national VET database contains data on quite large proportion of the ACE activity delivered at Neighbourhood Houses and similar organisations (ACE activity of about 240 Neighbourhood Houses and Community Learning Centres is reported to the national collection). The estimate is based on information from the Tasmanian ACE mapping project and censuses undertaken by Neighbourhood House networks in some States and Territories
- With regard to adult and community education delivered in Western Australia outside of TAFE, the NCVER estimates that around 120 000 to 150 000 students and about 2.5 million to 3.5 million annual hours of activity is delivered, taking the average non-TAFE provision across Australia as a basis for estimation
- Taking the ACE mapping project in Tasmania as an indicator for how to approximately calculate ACE participation figures related to other activity not covered in the national VET data collection, (i.e. non-vocational adult education programs and evening classes delivered at some Australian universities and libraries, extra-curricular activity at TAFE centres, some ACE activity at private and government secondary schools and some private personal enrichment and recreational activity) one arrives at the conclusion that there is ACE activity undertaken by about 300 000 to 500 000 students and accounting for about three to five

million annual hours not covered by the national VET data collection and the above estimates.

From all this it is estimated that in 1998 about 1.2 million to 1.4 million people undertook some form of ACE accounting for a total of 25 million to 30 million annual hours.

Appendix 4

National overview of ACE: Matrix summarising findings from phase 1

	ACT	NSW	NT	Queensland	SA	Tasmania	Victoria	WA
How is ACE defined in the state/territory?	By program type and client target group	By provider and program type	Not distinguished from VET	Current project will address this	Follows National ACE Policy 1997	By program type but difficulty exists at provider level	By provider and program type	By program type (non-accredited, non-VET courses or subjects)
How are ACE providers defined/described in the state/territory?		Independent, non-government, non-profit community-based organisations		Community-based	In receipt of State ACE funds	Access and learning programs within TAFE Tasmania	Non-profit, community-based and not TAFE, university, community or industry provider	TAFE colleges
Formal policy statement on ACE?	Yes: *ACT Policy on ACE, 1997*	Yes: *Recognising the Value of Lifelong Learning for All*	No: policies implemented within the VET system are the same for ACE	No: policy currently under development	No: generally follow the National ACE Policy 1997	No: policy currently under development	Yes: contained in Adult, Community and Further Education Act 1991	Yes: Strategy for Adult Community Education 1999-2001
Formal ACE advisory body	ACT Advisory Council on ACE	NSW Board of Adult and Community Education (BACE)	Community, Education and Training Advisory Group	ACE Advisory Committee	ACE Council	Tasmania State Training Authority ACE Advisory Committee	*Adult, Community and Further Education Board (ACFE Board)*	WADTE ACE Advisory Committee
Strategic plan for ACE	Adult and Community Education Strategic Plan 1999-2002	NSW Board of Adult and Community Education Strategic Plan 1998-2000	NT Employment and Training Authority is proposing to conduct a project on ACE.	ACE Committee's initial task is to prepare an ACE policy and implementation plan	ACE Council has prepared a strategic plan which reflects the National ACE policy.	Developing an ACE strategic plan based on the National ACE Policy strategy	*Taking ACE to the Year 2000*	Strategy for ACE: Promoting partnerships and pathways 1999-2001

	ACT	NSW	NT	Queensland	SA	Tasmania	Victoria	WA
Major ACE stakeholders	Office of Training and Adult Education and various providers	BACE and an extensive network of providers	NTETA and providers	TAFE Queensland (offers non-VET programs) and other providers	DETE ACE unit and various providers and community organisations	TAFE Tasmania, AMES and various providers and community organisations	*ACFEB and an extensive network of providers*	WADTE and partner agencies, including TAFE colleges
Funding arrangements for ACE	Annual ACE grants, administered by OTAE ($240,000)	Funding through BACE to providers and regional councils ($13m in 1999)	Only provided to registered training organisations (RTOs)	Funding provided for specific programs only	ACE Council receives and distributes funding ($600,000)	Funding provided for specific, VET programs only	*Funding provided by ACFE through regional councils*	WADTE provides funding for accredited VET programs only, Learning Centre Links are funded by DFCS
Information currently collected (1998):								
Internal state/territory data	Yes	Yes	No	Some	Yes, if funded	Not at this stage	*Yes*	TAFE only
Data submitted to national collection	Yes	Yes	Some (NT University only)	Some	Yes	Yes	*Yes*	No (WADTE providers only)
National data includes 'ACE in TAFE'	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	*Yes*	Yes
ACE provider data includes non-VET	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	*Yes*	Not applicable
ACE provider data includes VET	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	*Yes*	Not applicable
Consider there to be gaps in ACE information currently collected	Yes	National data does not adequately reflect ACE effort	Yes (proposed project will address this)	Yes	Some (mainly related to outcomes)	Yes (current project will address this)	*Some (related to unmet demand, pathways, outcomes etc)*	No specific comment provided at this stage

Appendix 5

National overview of ACE

A tabular summary

Tables

1. Definitions of ACE
2. Formal ACE Policy statements
3. Main ACE advisory bodies
4. ACE Strategic Plans
5. Key ACE Stakeholders
6. Funding arrangements
7. Information currently collected
8. Gaps in ACE information

Table 1: Definitions of ACE

State Territory	ACE Definitions
Australian Capital Territory	In terms of the ACT ACE policy and the Strategic plan of the ACE Advisory Council, ACE is defined in the following way. Adult and Community Education is an activity oriented toward life long learning which: ❖ Makes provision for the recurrent vocational, personal, cultural and social development of people regardless of their employment status, who are beyond compulsory school age but are not primarily engaged in post-school education and training programs ❖ Involves complex but coherent forms of cooperative learning geared to the adult status of its participants, and committed to their empowerment through skill acquisition, access to information and introduction to fields of knowledge ❖ Is not necessarily constrained by the conventions of place, time and teaching/learning methods which may apply in the familiar settings of the school, TAFE college or university ❖ Is fundamentally a learner-centred, needs-based practice, characterised by active concern for accessibility, democratic processes, social justice, and success measured primarily in terms relevant to the needs and aspirations of the individual participants
New South Wales	In terms of the NSW ACE Policy – *Recognising the Value of Lifelong Learning for All*, ACE is: ❖ Education and training provided by independent, non government, non profit, community owned and managed organisations ❖ Provides learning opportunities for adults in the broad areas of general, vocational, basic and community education ❖ Responds to the broad vocational needs of the community by offering an alternative entry point to the VET system ❖ Offers flexible locally based delivery of accredited and non accredited courses for unemployed people and those already in the workforce
Northern Territory	The Northern Territory does not distinguish between ACE and VET providers
Queensland	The Mapping and Identification of ACE in Queensland project will assist in forming a definition of ACE in Queensland. This project is due for completion in June 2000. Generally, ACE is both informal and formal learning delivered to the community by the community in ways that best suits the participants.
South Australia	The definition of ACE is aligned to the National ACE Policy 1997, i.e. ACE is characterised as learner-centred, responsive to the community, accessible and inclusive, diverse, varied and flexible. There is no state specific definition of ACE. However, ACE providers are defined as those currently in receipt of state funds.

Table 1: Definitions of ACE (cont'd)

State Territory	ACE Definitions
Tasmania	ACE is characterised as being flexible, varied, diverse, accessible, inclusive, learner-centred and responsive to community needs. ❖ Adult and Community Education is an activity oriented toward life long learning which: ❖ Makes provision for the recurrent vocational, personal, cultural and social development of people regardless of their employment status, who are beyond compulsory school age but are not primarily engaged in post-school education and training programs ❖ Involves complex but coherent forms of cooperative learning geared to the adult status of its participants, and committed to their empowerment through skill acquisition, access to information and introduction to fields of knowledge ❖ Is not necessarily constrained by the conventions of place, time and teaching/learning methods which may apply in the familiar settings of the school, TAFE college or university ❖ Is fundamentally a learner-centred, needs-based practice, characterised by active concern for accessibility, democratic processes, social justice, and success measured primarily in terms relevant to the needs and aspirations of the individual participants However the definition of ACE in Tasmania has become more problematic. Historically ACE was defined as programs which were situated in or administered by the now defunct Institute of Adult Education. The restructuring of TAFE and the institute has meant the Institute programs still exist in TAFE Tasmania but now fall within a program area called Access and Learning. In the past Access and bridging courses (Stream 2000) have not been counted as part of ACE mostly due to the location of the venue than the content or client group. This problem remains.
Victoria	In terms of the *Guidelines and Conditions for Eligibility and Registration of ACE organisations*, status as an ACE organisation is defined in the following way: ❖ Is incorporated or has a deed of delegation from an incorporated organisation or is acting under the auspices of an incorporated organisation ❖ Has a major focus on providing educational programs to meet the needs of Victorian adults ❖ Is managed by and responsive to the community which it serves ❖ Is not a TAFE institute, University, commercial provider or industry provider ❖ Is not for profit - defined as meaning that the rules of the organisation prevent (a) members of the organisation or its governing body receiving remuneration as members (b) the distribution of any of the organisation's revenue or property to members of the organisation or its governing body As defined in the ACE Strategic Plan, the ACE sector is flexible and innovative, locally responsive and accessible and defined by its self determining status. ACE is learner-centred, has education as its core, is community owned and driven, values and promotes diversity, is adaptive, responsive and innovative. In Victoria the term ACE sector refers only to community owned and managed adult education.
Western Australia	ACE is non-accredited courses such as Stream 1000 offered by TAFE colleges and a range of other formal or less formal learning initiatives.

Table 2: Formal policy statement on ACE

State Territory	Formal ACE policy	Policy	Purpose/goals
Australian Capital Territory	Yes	ACT Policy on ACE This policy was launched by the Minister for Education in July 1997.	The policy aims to improve the environment for ACE by: ❖ Maximising lifelong learning opportunities through the development of closer linkages within the ACE sector ❖ Opening pathways to other education and training sectors and the world of work ❖ Encouraging diversified ACE delivery and participation to help more people benefit from ACE ❖ Increasing the support for ACE by Government, industry and community organisations ❖ Promoting ACE to help Government, industry and the community appreciate its value ❖ Ensuring that quality and excellence are the basis for ACE activity
New South Wales	Yes	Recognising the Value of Lifelong Learning for All	In 1996 the NSW Board of Adult and Community Education developed this state policy. The five key goals of the policy are equitable, effective, responsive, efficient and complementary provision.
Northern Territory	No	Policies implemented within the VET system are the same for ACE.	
Queensland	No	An ACE policy is expected to be forwarded to Cabinet in early 2001 after consultation with stakeholders.	The ACE Advisory Committee has adopted the goals and strategic objectives of the 1997 National ACE policy and integrated these into their Workplan 2000 and the development of a Queensland ACE policy. DETIR with assistance from the ACE Advisory Committee will conduct consultations in April/May 2000 to identify and map the ACE sector. The project outcomes will inform the development of an ACE policy.
South Australia	No	There is no state specific ACE policy.	The ACE Council is legislated under VEET Act 1995 and reports to the Minister of Employment and Training. Although the Council is embedded in legislation no formal policy statement is attached to the legislation.
Tasmania	No	Tasmania is currently developing a draft policy.	TASTA ACE Advisory Committee decided that the National ACE policy be adopted as a working document for the State, with the State's Strategic Plan being an appendum to this Policy.

Victoria	Yes	Adult, Community and Further Education Act 1991	The partnership between the government and community was formalised in the Adult, Community and Further Education Act. The Act recognises ACE as a distinct education sector by virtue of its focus on adult education and its community ownership and management. It provides a framework to ensure adult education continues to meet the community's changing needs.
Western Australia	Yes	Strategy for Adult Community Education: Promoting partnerships and pathways 1999-2001	This is the formal policy statement for ACE in WA. The State has endorsed the national policy for ACE and has further committed to fostering growth in participation in formal and informal learning. The policy is focused on establishing strategic partnerships.

Table 3: Formal ACE Advisory bodies

State Territory	ACE advisory body	Structure	Terms of reference
Australian Capital Territory	ACT Advisory Council on ACE	The Council was established in February 1997. It functions as a committee of the Board of VETA. 12 members are appointed to the Advisory Council by the Minister for Education for a 2 year term. The Council is supported by the Office of Training and Adult Education (OTAE) within the Department of Education and Community Services. It assumes formal responsibility for ACE.	The Council advises the Minister on matters relevant to ACE. Their terms of reference are to provide advice on: ❖ The role of the ACE sector in the ACT and its relationship to VET ❖ The structures and administration of ACE in the ACT ❖ Training priorities in the ACE sector ❖ The provision of citizenship education ❖ The funding needs of the ACE sector
New South Wales	NSW Board of Adult and Community Education (BACE)	The relationship between Government and Adult and Community Education was established through the BACE Act 1990. A statutory Board was established in 1991 under the Act. 13 members are appointed to the Board by the Minister for a maximum term of 4 years. A Secretariat in the ACE and Education Access Directorate within the Department of Education and Training supports the work of the Board. The Board is assisted in the country regions by 9 Regional Councils. The Regional Councils employ Regional Officers and Regional Language and Literacy Co-ordinators to implement support activities.	The Board's terms of reference are to: ❖ promote the provision of ACE in NSW ❖ allocate government funds and grants to ACE providers ❖ foster and support the establishment of organisational structures and mechanisms that facilitate the co-ordinated provision of ACE in the state ❖ advise the Minister on needs and trends in ACE The Regional Councils are responsible for: ❖ The oversight and co-ordination of efficient and effective planning and provision of ACE in the regions ❖ Support and encouragement to ACE providers ❖ Providing advice to the Board on the regional distribution of funds and ❖ Ensuring the accountability of the use of funds
Northern Territory	Community, Education and Training Advisory Group		

South Australia	ACE Council	The Council was established under the VEET Act 1994. Not more than 9 persons are appointed to the Council by the Minister. The ACE Unit provides executive and administrative support to the Council and is assisted by ACE Community Liaison Officers who provide support and assistance to the funded organisations with regard to educational programs.	The Council's functions are to: ❖ Promote and encourage the provision of adult community education ❖ Advise the Minister on matters relating to government support for ACE ❖ Make recommendations to the Minister on the allocation of grants to ACE providers

Table 3: Formal ACE Advisory bodies (cont'd)

State Territory	ACE advisory body	Structure	Terms of reference
Queensland	ACE Advisory Committee	The Queensland Government established the Committee in April 1999. The Committee consists of 13 members and reports to VETEC.	Provide advice to: ❖ VETEC on the provision of ACE with a focus on lifelong learning, skills development and employment ❖ Bodies such as Jobs Policy Council concerning community employment programs and to other government bodies concerning national issues including lifelong learning and health
Tasmania	TASTA ACE Advisory Committee	The Committee was established in 1998. It advises the State Training Authority (TASTA) and the Minister on policy issues and implementation. Committee representatives are from TAFE Tasmania, ALA, Tasmanian Association of Community Houses, U3A, School for Seniors and equity group stakeholders	❖ Provide advice to the Department of Education on national and State policies and programs ❖ Monitor the implementation of state implementation plans ❖ Advise on best practice in ACE ❖ Respond to documents as requested by the Department of Education ❖ Monitor projects relating to ACE ❖ Advise on the provision of training programs in ACE ❖ Advise on issues requiring research ❖ Consult with key stakeholders outside the committee
Victoria	Adult, Community and Further Education Board (ACFE Board)	The Board and the Regional Councils were established in 1992 under the ACFE Act 1991. 13 board members are appointed by the Minister for Tertiary Education and Training for a 3 year term. The ACFE Board works with the State Training Board to plan the direction and delivery of ACE. The Board is supported by the ACFE Division of OTFE within the Department of Education. The Board is assisted by 9 Regional Councils in the country regions.	The major functions of the Board are to: ❖ Plan, promote and allocate resources ❖ Develop policies ❖ Advise the Minister on matters related to adult, community and further education The regional councils: ❖ Develop regional plans and policies ❖ Promote, support, resource and evaluate adult education provision ❖ Contribute to statewide planning and policy development ❖ Prepare reports for the ACFE Board

Western Australia	ACE Advisory Committee	The Committee reports to the Chief Executive of WADOT. 12 members are invited to the Committee by the Chief Executive for a 3 year term. Administrative support is provided by the Access and Participation Directorate within WADOT.	❖ Assist in data definition, collection and administration for the purposes of the State Training Profile, in relation to the participation of the ACE sector ❖ Provide advice with the implementation of National and State policies and strategies including the National Policy on ACE, in the context of the State's definition of an operational framework for ACE ❖ Provide advice on community needs for recognition of adult learning ❖ Provide advice on TAFE colleges and centres developing co-operative and/or collaborative arrangements with community providers

Table 4: Strategic Plans for ACE

State Territory	Strategic Plan	Strategic goals
Australian Capital Territory	Adult and Community Education Strategic Plan 1999-2002	1. Promote and value the benefits of ACE 2. Foster opportunities for a diversity of adult and community learning 3. Strengthen the lifelong learning connections of ACE 4. Foster the contribution of ACE to community well being and development
New South Wales	NSW Board of Adult and Community Education Strategic Plan 1998-2000	*Vision*: People's lives are enriched through high quality lifelong learning. *Mission:* To support and guide the development of efficient, locally responsive adult and community education that contributes to a creative, highly skilled, productive and equitable society. The key strategic goals are: 1. *Equitable provision* – ensure that ACE is responsive to the needs of learners and reflects the diversity in communities in NSW 2. *Effective provision* – ensure quality learning outcomes for all ACE participants 3. *Responsive provision* – ensure that the delivery of ACE is flexible, meets the needs of local communities and is underpinned by sound research 4. *Efficient provision* – ensure that there is enhanced quality of services for learners and clear accountability of providers for funds received 5. *Complementary provision* – ensure clear cross-sectoral pathways which reflect society's need for lifelong learning and meets this need by providing enhanced opportunities
Northern Territory	NTETA is proposing to conduct a project on ACE.	
Queensland	The ACE Committee's initial task is to prepare a Queensland ACE policy and implementation plan.	The *vision* of the Committee is to encourage adult learning which will drive structural change to achieve equity of access, participation and outcome. Currently the Committee has adopted the goals and strategic objectives of the 1997 National ACE policy. These are to: ❖ Realise the potential of ACE ❖ Diversify opportunities for lifelong learning ❖ Strengthen the responsiveness of ACE to learners

South Australia	The ACE Council has prepared a strategic plan which reflects the National ACE policy.	The Council is committed to ensuring ACE improves knowledge, skills and quality of life for SA with a particular emphasis on the disadvantaged. To achieve the vision of developing a sector that has the flexibility to respond effectively to these needs, the strategic plan affirms the increasing importance of: ❖ Fostering a culture of learning in Australian society and organisations ❖ Collaborating with all education and training sectors within a context of lifelong learning.
Tasmania	Tasmania is developing an ACE strategic plan based on the National ACE Policy strategy	
Victoria	Taking ACE to the Year 2000	*Vision:* Lifelong learning opportunities in ACE generate educated and empowered citizens and a strong Victorian Community. *Mission:* To lead the vigorous development of lifelong learning in the community so that more people can realise their potential as individuals, citizens and workers. The ACFE Board and the STB are required by legislation to develop 3 year plans for the development of ACE in Victoria. The current key strategies are to: 1. *Widen participation* in ACE through policies which recognise, respond to and affirm the diversity of Victoria's population 2. *Augment learning structures* in ACE which will give expression to the best of lifelong learning in community settings 3. *Create self-renewing learning societies* through community ownership of ACE 4. *Use public funds flexibly* to extend opportunities and improve the quality of outcomes in ACE
Western Australia	Strategy for ACE: Promoting partnerships and pathways 1999-2001	WADOT commits itself to activities which will: *Foster a culture of lifelong learning through the collaboration of all education and training sectors.* The Department has established strategic partnerships with community-based organisations to improve the range of learning opportunities. In committing to the implementation of the national policy the department has 3 objectives consistent with the State Training Strategy: 1. Acknowledge and foster the capacity of ACE to be an important agent of lifelong learning 2. Promote a culture of continuous improvement and customer satisfaction among providers of ACE 3. Enhance recognition of the contribution of ACE to vocational education and training and employment

Table 5: Key ACE Stakeholders

State Territory	Stakeholders
Australian Capital Territory	❖ Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT), TAFE in the ACT - major provider of second-chance education. ❖ ACT Secondary Colleges – most run extensive ACE programs ❖ CIT Solutions - the commercial arm of CIT runs an extensive ACE program ❖ Community Services Organisations (5) - non-profit community based organisations that deliver a range of ACE and community support programs ❖ CanACT – the peak body of Neighbourhood Houses in the ACT ❖ Tuggeranong Link of Neighbourhood Houses – deliver a range of ACE and community support programs ❖ Other ACE providers – Centre for Continuing Education at the Australian National University and smaller issues-focused organisations (e.g. Migrant Resource Centre, Red Cross, Work Resources Centre)
New South Wales	There are 70 major ACE providers (Multi-ACE providers) and smaller community organisations (Other Providers) funded by the Board to deliver ACE courses. More than 50 of these providers are located in regional, rural or remote areas. In 1998 there were more than 348,000 enrolments in courses run by Multi-ACE providers with 213,000 enrolments in courses conducted by Multi-ACE providers in the Sydney metropolitan area and 134,000 enrolments in regional, rural and remote areas. ***Multi-ACE providers consist of:*** ❖ *Evening and Community Colleges*: (24) – daytime/evening and weekend classes using school facilities and other venues; 17 are in the metropolitan area and 7 in regional areas ❖ *Community Adult Education Centres (CAECs)* (46) - located in rural/regional NSW and range from small organisations with a P/T co-ordinator with limited courses in a few venues to large entities with several F/T staff co-ordinators and large range of courses and many venues ❖ *Workers Educational Association (WEA)* (3) – centres are located in metropolitan Sydney and in regional areas in Newcastle and Wollongong *Regional Councils of Adult and Community Education* Regional Councils were established as community owned and managed organisations with volunteer management committees and incorporated under the Associations Incorporation Act. There are 9 regional councils. ***Peak Body organisations*** ❖ NSW ACE Council – promotes and protects the interest of all adult and community education centres ❖ Community Adult Education Centres (CAECs) ❖ Evening and Community College's Association (ECCA) ❖ Worker's Educational Association State Executive (WEA) The CAECs, ECCA and WEA represent providers across NSW and hold membership of the NSW ACE Council.

Northern Territory	Key stakeholders include registered training organisations, clients, industry, communities, ITABs and Government. NTETA have proposed a project (to be funded) to map the ACE sector in the NT.
Queensland	TAFE Queensland's Stream 1000 programs play a significant role for ACE in Queensland. The consultations in mapping and identifying the ACE sector will include the following stakeholders: ❖ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Trade Union Provincial Councils ❖ ACE-VET program applicants ❖ Adult Learning Australia Queensland, Job Australia Queensland, Open Learning, Volunteering Queensland Networks ❖ ACE Advisory Council members ❖ Australian South Sea Islander, Migrant and Ethnic Groups ❖ Canegrowers, Country Women's, Graziers, Parent and Citizen, Regional Councils of Development Association ❖ Chamber of Commerce and ITABs ❖ Church bodies and service clubs ❖ Community Health, Migrant Resource, Neighbourhood and Youth Crisis Centres ❖ Community Literacy program providers, Registered Training providers and U3A ❖ Disability and women's organisations ❖ Individuals ❖ Libraries, Local, State Governments, DETIR regional offices ❖ Nursing Mothers ❖ Office of Rural Communities and rural agencies ❖ TAFE-ACE Queensland, schools and tertiary sector
South Australia	SA Peak agencies: ❖ Adult Learning Australia (SA) ❖ SACAL ❖ Workers' Educational Association of SA ❖ Community and Neighbourhood Houses Association ❖ University of the Third Age (SA) Inc ❖ Council on the Ageing (COTA) ❖ Network of Women in Further Education
Tasmania	❖ Adult Education division of TAFE Tasmania – runs adult education courses (Class program) which includes accredited (up to Certificate IV), non accredited and Stream 2000 courses ❖ Adult Literacy and Basic Education and Workplace Adult Education Services of TAFE ❖ Adult Migrant English Service ❖ Neighbourhood Houses – non accredited adult education courses ❖ Community organisations, on-line access centres, businesses or government agencies providing training/courses or information sessions. A mapping ACE project is due for completion in June 2000. This will provide identification of the true range of ACE in Tasmania.

Victoria	In 1998, 8.97 million student contact hours (SCH) were delivered in ACE organisations through 316,995 module enrolments. Key stakeholders providing these programs include: ❖ TAFE institutes ❖ Adult Multicultural Education Services (AMES) ❖ Community organisations – there are more than 550 providers – refer to list in Annual report ❖ Council of Adult Education (CAE) ❖ Private agencies ❖ Regional Councils
Western Australia	WADOT's partners include: ❖ Adult Learning Australia (WA) ❖ Learning Centre Link ❖ TAFE colleges ❖ Telecentre Network ❖ University of Western Australia Extension

Table 6: ACE Funding arrangements

State Territory	Funding types
Australian Capital Territory	The major funding of ACE in the ACT is through the annual ACE grants. These are sponsored by the Advisory Council and administered by OTAE. In 2000 grants totalled approximately $240,000 for 41 ACE programs delivered by 35 different organisations. Training providers do not have to be registered to received government funding. The selection criteria for ACE grants includes delivering a program which increases the level of adult learning, meets a demonstrated need in the community and preferably meets the needs of identified disadvantaged groups. ACE organisations also access other community development and health funding from other ACT Government agencies. ACE programs e.g. Secondary Colleges Community Education Programs are provided on a cost recovery fee-for-service basis.
New South Wales	The Department of Education and Training provide annual funding to the NSW ACE sector through BACE. The majority of funds are allocated on a funding formula basis which reflects the demographic differences and the needs of communities servicing disadvantaged groups. In 1999 more than $13 million of government funds were allocated. *Multi-ACE providers (main providers)* There are about 70 providers who receive recurrent funding from BACE. Programs include: ❖ General and non-accredited ACE (Stream 1000 and non-accredited Streams 2100-4500) ❖ Language and literacy ❖ VET (including funding for Equipment and Resources) ❖ Equity initiatives ❖ Indigenous Education Strategic Initiatives To be eligible for funds in this program providers must be independent, community owned and managed, not for profit organisation based in NSW and incorporated as a company, association or co-operative for primary purpose of providing ACE. *General ACE Type B Provider (other providers)* Approximately 30 providers receive small grants from BACE on a yearly basis. This program does not offer funding for language and literacy and VET. *Regional Council funding* The Board also funds the 9 Regional Councils of ACE which are eligible for funding for: ❖ Language and literacy funding allocations to support activities not directly involved in ACE delivery ❖ As a 'caretaker' or sponsor on behalf of ACE organisations not yet eligible to receive funds under the Maintenance of ACE program To be eligible for this funding Regional Councils must be incorporated as a not for profit association for the primary purpose of supporting local ACE and had received funding for 1999 under the Regional Councils program. Funds are allocated on a funding formula basis and include baseline office expenses and 2 variable amounts which take account of regional variations in population, area and level of ACE activity. Other types of ACE funding include fee-for-service revenue, contracted training, sponsorships, membership and donations.
Northern Territory	To receive government funds all providers in the Northern Territory are required to be registered as a training organisation (RTO). To qualify as an RTO the organisation must meet the Australian Recognition Framework arrangements.

Queensland	Within DETIR, funding for ACE providers is provided for the following programs: 1. *Community Literacy Program* – funds non-government community based agencies to deliver accredited literacy and numeracy training. This is particularly aimed at people who are disadvantaged and not likely to attend formal institutions. Maximum $5000 per year. 2. *ACE-VET program* – funds registered and non-registered community based organisations to deliver accredited VET courses. Non registered community based organisations are encouraged to partner with a local VETEC RTO. 3. *The Community Employment Assistance Program* – a component of the Government's Breaking the Unemployment Cycle initiative which funds community and public sector organisations to work with long term unemployed people. 4. *Community Jobs Plan* – a component of Government's Breaking the Unemployment Cycle initiative which funds community organisations for projects that offer learning work experiences. 5. *TAFE-ACE (Stream 1000):* These courses offer a variety of subjects including vocationally orientated short courses, personal development and recreational programs on a full cost-recovery basis with concession rates offered to people who are financially in need. DETIR does not fund non accredited programs. However other state government departments and local governments offer funding for different learning activities.
South Australia	The ACE Council receives funding from the State and Commonwealth Governments of about $600,000 per year. The WEA is the largest provider of ACE is SA. It receives funding under a Performance Agreement with the Minister ($50,000). Funding categories cover: ❖ Category A: One year grant offered annually up to $1250 – suited to organisations planning to deliver short courses for an identified target group – a minimum of 312 student contact hours (SCH) is required ❖ Category B: Two year grant of up to $5000 a year – general program of short courses/ or educational opportunities with a pathway that could benefit the pursuit of further education, employment or training – a minimum of 1250 SCH is required ❖ Category C: specific community-based language, literacy and numeracy programs: one year grant offered annually up to $5500 – a minimum 1100 SCH is required ❖ Category D: special initiatives funds – includes professional development and promotional activities Organisations eligible to apply for funding must be incorporated under the SA Corporate Affairs 'Not for Profit' Act or auspiced (sponsored through an incorporated organisation) and be a community based organisation able to provide ACE programs to people who are more comfortable learning in a community setting. Individuals, State/Commonwealth Government departments and agencies including TAFE Institutes, schools, adult re-entry schools and organisations receiving significant education and training funding are not eligible to apply.

Tasmania	*Adult education programs and adult literacy and basic education programs* is purchased from TAFE Tasmania by the Office of VET. Funding is managed through a negotiated purchase agreement. TAFE Tasmania also obtains funds through fees charged for Adult Education class programs. Funding for *Advanced English for Migrants Program* (part of the AMES) is sourced from DETYA. State recurrent funding for ACE provision by the non government community organisations is also administered by the Equity Standards branch of the Department of Education. Funding is allocated on a submission basis. Organisations which are eligible to apply for funding are Community Houses and other non profit, non government community based organisations. The ACE Advisory Council assess the applications.
Victoria	ACFE program areas include: ❖ Adult Literacy and Basic Education ❖ Victorian Certificate of Education for adults ❖ General preparatory and bridging programs ❖ English as a Second Language ❖ Training and further education ❖ General adult education programs Funds are allocated through the ACFE Board and Regional Councils for the following funding types: ❖ *State recurrent funding* for programs conducted by community-based organisations and CAEs are allocated for program delivery, support, infrastructure and administration of minor works and services. ❖ *Commonwealth growth funds* for community based organisations to deliver access and vocational courses in priority areas are allocated to ACE organisations including CAEs and AMES. ❖ *ANTA adult literacy funds* are allocated to ACE organisations, AMES and TAFE institutes for program and program support initiatives. The ACFE Board also manages the allocation of funds to TAFE Institutes and other providers for the DETYA Advanced English for Migrants program. To apply for government funds ACE organisations must first be assessed for eligibility to deliver non accredited training and meet the needs of the Council. To deliver accredited further education courses ACE organisations must first be eligible to apply for government funds and then seek registration through the Regional Councils. ACE organisations seeking to deliver accredited vocational education courses or training packages must register with the State Training Board. The *Statewide Funding Model* implements the ACFE Board's policies and processes for determining the distribution of the allocation of funds to the 9 Regional Councils. The *Regional Funding Framework* implements the Board's policy on the allocation of funds by the Regional Councils to eligible ACE organisations. This also includes a performance agreement between the ACFE Board and the Councils.

Western Australia	The WA Government provides funding for accredited programs. These include bridging and entry courses for targeted groups and language literacy courses. All accredited courses are delivered by registered training organisations of which some are community based. Training organisations must be registered to obtain government funding. There are two levels of registration; (1) QETO – quality endorsed training organisation i.e. full registration and (2) partial registration where the training organisation is endorsed to deliver nominated courses. Learning Centre Links are funded by the Department of Family and Children's Services.

Table 7: ACE information currently collected

State or Territory	AVETMISS data	Other data
Australian Capital Territory	Programs funded through the ACT ACE grants are required to provide the following data in addition to the descriptions and program content: ❖ Number of participants ❖ Postcode of participants ❖ Program hours delivered ❖ Numbers in designated target groups Enrolment records are required to be kept up to 2 years with client identifying information. Support is provided in terms of master files for course/module classifications. Software for enrolment systems can be purchased for a minimal fee. These systems produce AVETMISS reports and are compliant with the new standard.	Information on ACE programs was collected on a one-off basis as part of an ANTYA funded project: *Report on ACE in the ACT* (1999). The report includes the following information on ACE in 1998: ❖ programs offered (classification) ❖ registered providers of accredited curriculum ❖ origin of participants ❖ target audiences for ACE programs ❖ funding sources accessed ❖ program hours delivered ❖ number of programs ❖ program attendance ❖ staffing of ACE provision ❖ desire to provide more programs ❖ determination of program need ❖ use of syllabus
New South Wales	ACE providers receiving funds from BACE collect data to the AVETMIS standard on all accredited and non-accredited activity. In addition 5 data items specific to NSW ACE are collected: ❖ ACE affiliation ❖ Venue postcode ❖ BACE funding source ❖ Concessions ❖ Student contact hours (nominal module hours x module enrolments) BACE annually produces the Statistical Data Collection Guidelines to assist ACE providers in the AVETMISS data collection process and classification issues. Computer based enrolment systems are available (4) which are AVETMISS compliant.	BACE also produces the NSW ACE Enrolment Statistics which includes ACE participation profiles of: ❖ Enrolments by region ❖ Multi-ACE providers ❖ Students ❖ Accredited VET enrolments ❖ Language and Literacy enrolments ❖ Equity enrolments ❖ General ACE Providers
Northern Territory	Statistics for ACE providers is not available as a separate item in the data provided to NCVER.	

Queensland	AVETMISS data is collected on the activities of: ❖ TAFE-ACE ❖ ACE-VET program ❖ Community Literacy program. Support is provided in the form of enrolment forms. Software packages for computer based enrolment systems which are AVETMISS compliant can also be purchased.	The mapping and identification project will assist in the collection of ACE data. Information will include: ❖ Types of learners, providers, provision, infrastructure, roles and responsibilities in the delivery of ACE ❖ Ascertaining trends in the motivation of students to choose ACE ❖ a means of supporting awareness and infrastructure in the development of adult education in the community based sector in Qld
South Australia	ACE providers receiving state funds must collect data based on student outcomes and student contact hours. ACE providers are given a free ACE computer based or paper based enrolment system which is AVETMISS compliant. Ongoing support is also provided along with module/course descriptions and coding master files.	In 1995 the *Path-finder: Mapping ACE in SA* project was conducted. This project aimed to demographically map the ACE sector, identify providers of ACE and establish a database of ACE providers in SA. Information collected included: ❖ Number of ACE providers in SA ❖ Courses offered ❖ Attendances ❖ Registered providers ❖ Funding sources ❖ Staffing resources During 1999 some ACE providers also submitted all activity as part of a trial. ACE client surveys are also randomly conducted. and this information covers reasons for enrolling, course usefulness and course outcomes.
Tasmania		The current project *Mapping ACE in Tasmania* (to be completed in June 2000) will collect ACE information.
Victoria	AVETMISS compliant enrolment and client data is collected from all ACE organisations receiving government funding. In addition to this data the following information is collected: ❖ Program categories ❖ Funding categories ❖ Concessions Organisations do not have to provide data on programs not funded by government but the majority forward data on all courses offered including user pays or those funded through other sources. ACE providers are supported through the Regional councils in terms of training and purchase of software systems.	Funded organisations also conduct student satisfaction surveys and are required to report summary results of these annually. The ACFE Board also produces *Access for Adults: Summary Report* publications which utilises ACE data with the ABS census and provides an overview of participation in further education and adult community education across Victoria. *Key information on ACFE – Victoria* provides statistical highlights.

Western Australia	Student contact and enrolment data is collected only for accredited training funded by WADOT and for Stream 1000 courses delivered in TAFE colleges.	

Table 8: Gaps in ACE Information

State or Territory	ACE information gaps
Australian Capital Territory	For the 2000 ACE grants the ACE Advisory Council will request more comprehensive information on participants which is AVETMISS compliant. This will include: ❖ Postcode ❖ Date of birth ❖ Sex ❖ Ethnicity (language spoken at home other than English Y/N flag) ❖ Disability ❖ Schooling level ❖ Prior qualification level ❖ Employment status
New South Wales	ACE providers and the Board view the AVETMIS standard as not adequately reflecting ACE effort particularly in the area of non-accredited VET. In addition they state that some fields are not applicable to NSW ACE such as client names. NSW suggests that the project methodology incorporate some modifications to the AVETMIS Standard to allow for greater flexibility at a state level and enable a range of options to be included. NSW ACE supports recommendations 1 to 8 in the National Key Performance Indicators for ACE report (Kaye Schofield and Associates) and would like these to be included in the project. However they argue that this will not be feasible unless the AVETMIS Standard is modified. NSW supports the following recommendations: ❖ National principles as outlined in the "Performance Indicators in ACE' report should be adopted for performance measurement in ACE ❖ Improvement of AVETMISS fields 'outcomes values' and 'description' for modules outside the AQF ❖ Common ACE data specification be included in the provider outcome identifier field which would be based on the Mayer competencies ❖ When the ABS is collecting information and reporting on the type of education/training provider 'Community Education Providers' be included ❖ An ACE specific Employer Satisfaction Survey be distributed ❖ A Community Satisfaction Survey be commissioned, at least every 2 years to ascertain community perceptions on the benefits and outcomes of post-compulsory education ❖ Student Outcomes Survey be modified which separates ACE providers from registered private providers ❖ The question which relates to the reasons for undertaking the course and outcomes gained better reflect the aspirations of ACE and other learners ❖ The Student Outcomes Survey sample include those who have completed non-VET modules ❖ A trial telephone interview methodology be used in the Employer Satisfaction Survey NSW proposes that several amendments to enhance the project scope be made. These include: ❖ Possible changes to the current collection arrangements be considered (2nd recommendation page 3) and an Executive Summary should be circulated to provider and key stakeholders (instead of interested parties) as a final project output (3rd recommendation page 3)

Northern Territory	NTETA is proposing a project on ACE to be funded - *Mapping the ACE sector in the Northern Territory*. The project will aim to determine the type and extent of ACE provision in the NT. Information collected will include: ❖ The number and type of providers, including provider details ❖ The target clientele and areas of ACE sector in which they fall ❖ Type and level of courses ❖ Unmet course demand The information will be used to: ❖ Develop and promote ACE in the NT ❖ Inform NTETA planning for ACE ❖ Strengthen ACE provision in line with NTETA's three year plan
Queensland	❖ The wide variety of learning programs offered by community-based organisations ❖ The outcomes of these activities ❖ The ability or otherwise of community-based organisations to enter into the vocational education and training sector ❖ The ability or otherwise of community-based organisations to comply with AVETMISS standards ❖ The resources required by community-based providers i.e. how to assist community providers ❖ The destination pathways to employment and/or further education and training
South Australia	The SA data collection meets the ACE Councils and departmental requirements. However providers would like to see more value placed on student outcomes and achievements.
Tasmania	The current project *Mapping ACE in Tasmania* (to be completed in June 2000) will collect information relating to: ❖ Type of organisation ❖ Significance of ACE within the organisation's work ❖ Types of programs ❖ Delivery methods ❖ Registration as RTO ❖ Target groups ❖ Sources of funding ❖ Staffing ❖ Unmet demand ❖ Level of community input into organisation
Victoria	In Victoria there is a need for more information about: ❖ Unmet demand ❖ Reasons for non completion ❖ Pathways taken by students who did not achieve a qualification or who did not complete course/module
Western Australia	No comment

ACE Resources

National

Adult Learning Australia Inc, Annual Report 1998-1999
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Key Performance Indicators for Adult and Community Education, Kaye Schofield and Associates, 1998
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ACE Adult and Community Education News, March-April 2000
ACT Advisory Council on ACE Strategic Plan, 1999-2002
ACT Advisory Council on Adult and Community Education's response to NCVER's initial request for ACE information
ACT Policy on Adult and Community Education, 1997
Report on Adult and Community Education in the ACT, 1999
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2000 ACE grants: General information

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NSW Board of Adult and Community Education: Background Information about the Board of Adult and Community Education
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NSW Board of Adult and Community Education Strategic Plan 1998-2000
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Statistical Data Collection Guidelines for 2000, NSW Board of Adult and Community Education
Strategic Directions in Research by NSW Board of Adult and Community Education, 1998-2000
The ACE Advantage: ACE Information Kit

Northern Territory

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Northern Territory Employment and Training Authority's response to NCVER's initial request for ACE information.

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ACE-VET: Bringing learning opportunities to you and your community, DETIR (brochure)
AVETMISS compliant software suppliers, DETIR
Community employment assistance program, DETIR 1999 (brochure)
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Mapping and Identifying the Adult and Community Education Sector in Queensland, 1999 (in progress)
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State Fund Source Codes and Descriptions, DETIR
1999 Community Training Identification Project: Phase II, Access and Equity Unit, DETIR Queensland
1999 Enrolment Form, DETIR

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ACEC Enrolment form
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Adult Community Education (ACE) Unit Adult Community Education Grant Program Evaluation DEET - Grant Declaration 1999-2000
Adult Community Education Program ACE Student Survey, 2000
Department of Education, Training and Employment Minor Grant Agreement Category
Department of Education, Training and Employment Minor Grant Agreement Category D – 2000
Eastwood Community Centre – ACE funded and non ACE funded activity
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The Adult Community Education (ACE) Grant Information Book 2000/2001 Part I: General Information, ACE Council, DEET 2000
The Adult Community Education (ACE) Grant Information Book 2000/2001 Part II: Application Forms and Information, ACE Council, DEET
Vocational Education, Employment and Training ACT 1994
WEA Adult Education Annual Report 1998

Tasmania

ACE Advisory Committee's response to NCVER's initial request for ACE information
Department of Education Adult Community Education (ACE) Advisory Committee – Terms of Reference
Guidelines for 2000 Non Government Organisation Adult and Community Education (ACE) Grants
Mapping ACE in Tasmania 1999: A project brief (in progress)
Mentoring project: Tasmanian and Victorian Community Houses

Victoria

Adult, Community and Further Education Act 1991
Adult, Community and Further Education Board Annual report 1998-99
Adult, Community and Further Education Board 2000 Funding Policies, October 1999
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Taking ACE to the Year 2000: A Vision, Adult, Community and Further Education Board Strategic Plan
1998 Adult, Community and Further Education Access for Adults: Summary Report, ACFE Board, 1999

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Adult Community Education Advisory Committee: Information for Members' Manual, WADOT November 1998

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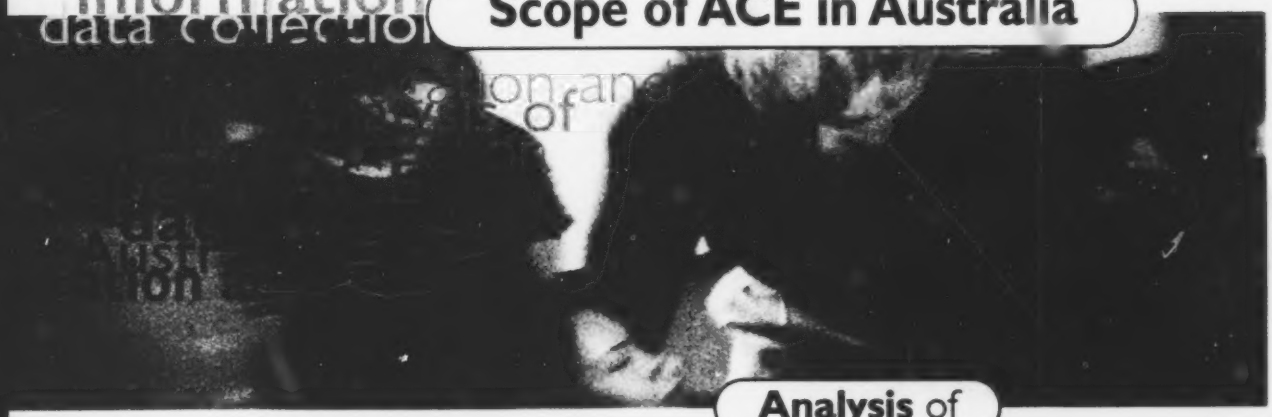
NCVER

Scope of ACE in Australia



Analysis of existing information in national education and training data collection

Volume 2

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B Knight

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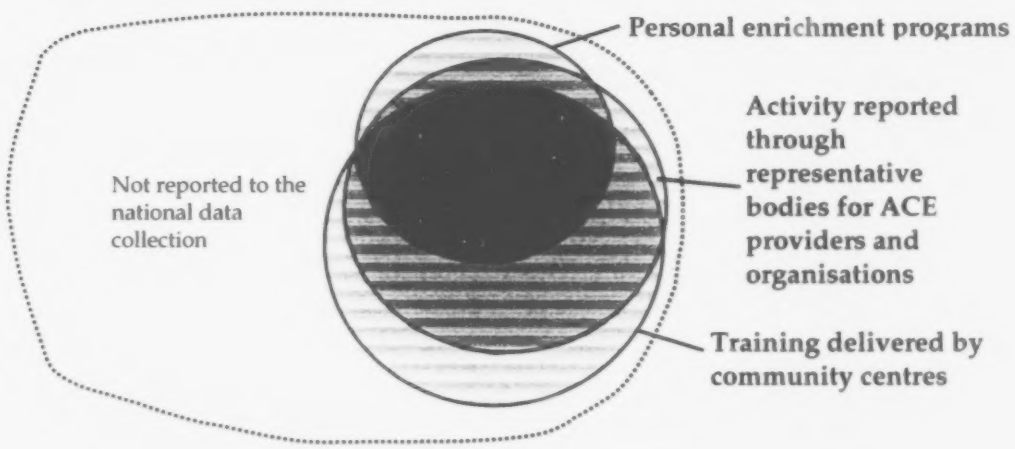
1 Scope of data collection[1]

Adult and community education (ACE) reporting mechanisms, if at all, are typically only in place where data collection and collation are part of public funding arrangement. The national education and training data collection would be impossible without such funding arrangements. It primarily collects data on vocational education and training (VET) as delivered by VET providers whose education and training delivery, wholly or partly, is funded by the Australian National Training Authority or from recurrent and specific State and Territory allocations for VET.

As such, the collection of data on ACE activity is not the prime focus of the database. However, data on most of ACE delivered in formal VET programs and data on a large part of ACE delivered in the context of informal VET are being collected. The collection also contains a large amount of information on education and training whose curricular intent is recreational rather than vocational but which contributes to the personal, cultural and social development of the student. This information originates from the voluntary reporting to the national database or is part of additional funding arrangements in some States/Territories.

Figure 1.1: Schematic illustration of Australia's ACE activity from the perspective of the national education and training data collection


Personal enrichment programs
Activity reported through representative bodies for ACE providers and organisations
Not reported to the national data collection
Training delivered by community centres

The national data collection complies with the Australian Vocational Education and Training Management Information System Standard (AVETMISS). Hence data elements and data entries are well defined. Due to this structure of the national data collection, any querying of the available information requires a decision on what actually constitutes ACE.

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[1] The national education and training provider database primarily collects data on vocational education and training (VET) as delivered by VET providers who are in receipt of public funds for some of their training provision.

It should be noted that in Australia there exists VET which is not funded by the States/Territories or the Commonwealth. Since reporting of VET activity is a requirement of the funding arrangements between education and training providers and public funding agencies, privately funded VET activity is not necessarily reported to the national database. Therefore the national data collection only contains such information on privately-funded VET activity that is provided to the NCVER on a voluntary basis.

From the perspective of the national database, three different approaches to define what is ACE can be justified:

1. Education and training activity reported through representative bodies for ACE providers and organisations
2. Education and training delivered by providers or organisations considering themselves community centres
3. Non-vocational activity that contributes to the personal, cultural and social development of and adult ("recreation, leisure and personal enrichment programs")

NCVER refrains from making a decision which of the three approaches is the 'correct' one to choose. The results of the desk top analysis indicate that the scope of ACE varies from State/Territory to State/Territory. We therefore summarise the information available from the national data collection by accommodating for all three definitions of ACE.

The three above approaches define sectors of Australia's ACE which are not independent of each other. Actually, there exist quite large overlaps between them. For instance, most of the education and training activity provided at community centres is reported through representative bodies for ACE providers and organisations, and some of this activity is personal enrichment activity. Figure 1.1 depicts schematically how these three nationally reported parts of Australia's ACE sector (represented by circles) intersect.

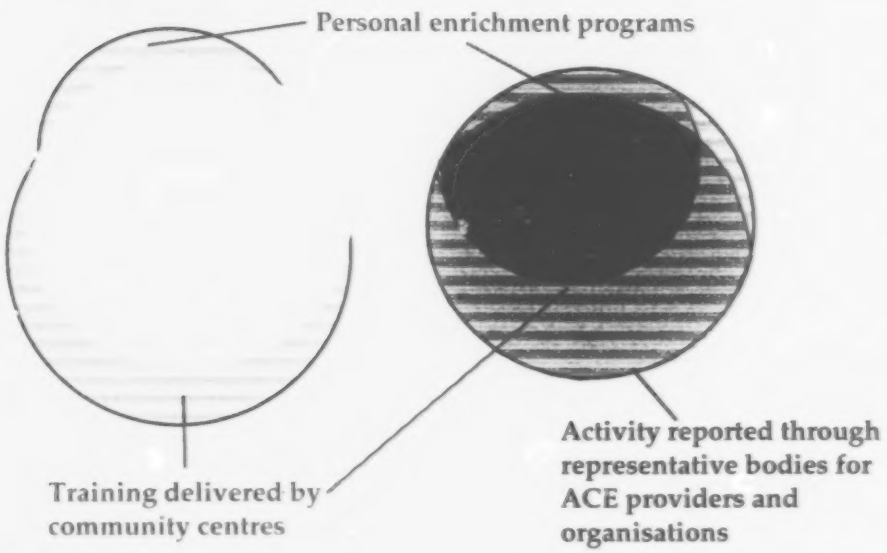
Finally, it should be emphasised that the figures reported below do not reflect all activity in Australia's ACE sector (see Figure 1.1). Although most of the accredited vocational programs, and a majority of the vocational activity delivered in an informal context are covered, the data presented here are not at all complete. The NCVER estimates that the current collection of data is centred largely on those for whom ACE is a core activity. The remaining market which is not currently captured includes:

- most activity offered by Universities of the Third Age (U3A) and Schools for Seniors in States/Territories other than Victoria as well as some of Victoria's U3A activity
- some activity delivered by Community and Neighbourhood Houses, Community Adult Education Centres and Community Learning Centres
- non-TAFE activity in Western Australia
- non-vocational adult education programs and evening classes delivered at some Australian universities and libraries, and by the Evening and Community College's Association
- some recreation, leisure or personal enrichment activity at TAFE centres, which allows community access to TAFE facilities in accordance with State/Territory policies
- some activity at private and government secondary schools; and
- private recreation, leisure and personal enrichment activity such as that provided through cultural associations (Alliance Française, health centres, dance studios).

1.1 Activity as reported by representative bodies for ACE providers and organisations

In each State/Territory there exist umbrella organisations such as TAFE NSW or Private Providers Queensland which collect data on vocational or recreational education and training activity of training providers or other organisations, and pass these data on to the national data collection. These umbrella organisations are classified as being representative bodies for either 'TAFE and other government providers', 'ACE providers', or 'private and other non-government providers'.

Figure 1.2: Schematic illustration of that part of the nationally reported ACE sector which results from the reporting of data by representing bodies for ACE providers


Personal enrichment programs
Training delivered by community centres
Activity reported through representative bodies for ACE providers and organisations

In 1998 the ACE provider umbrella organisations that reported to the national data collection were:

- The New South Wales Board of Adult and Community Education (BACE)
- The Adult, Community and Further Education (ACFE) Board in Victoria
- Queensland Adult and Community Education
- The Workers' Educational Association (WEA) of South Australia Inc
- The South Australian Adult and Community Education Unit
- Tasmania Adult and Community Education and Adult Migrant English Service (AMES)
- Numeracy and Literacy Tasmania
- The ACE Unit of the Northern Territory University (NTU)
- Australian Capital Territory Adult and Community Education

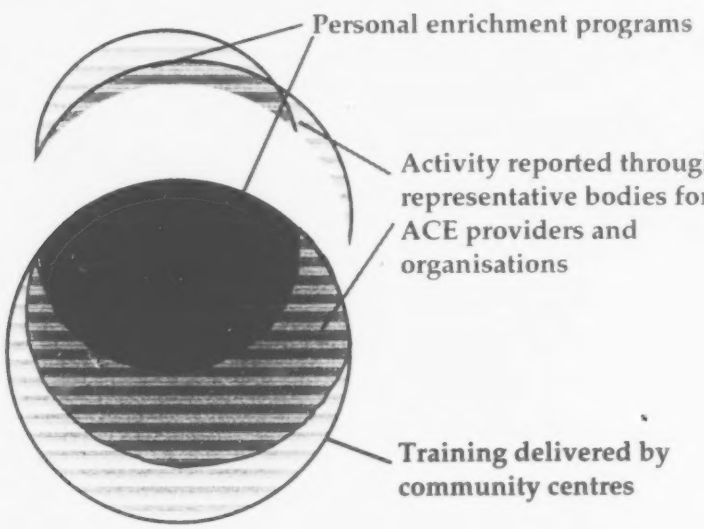
Most of the providers and organisation reporting through these listed umbrella organisations are adult education centres or community access centres (see definitions in the next section). However, some of them are not. Therefore this part of Australia's ACE sector also includes

some fifty TAFE institutes, universities, industry organisations or adult migrant education providers which have reported to ACFE, Queensland ACE, the South Australian ACE Unit, Tasmania ACE and AMES, Numeracy and Literacy Tasmania, or NTU's ACE Unit.

Education and training activity offered by ACE providers and organisations includes VET as well as recreation, leisure and personal enrichment education and training activity.

1.2 Education and training delivered by community centres

Figure 1.3: Schematic illustration of that part of the nationally reported ACE sector which is defined by the training delivered by community centres


Personal enrichment programs
Activity reported through representative bodies for ACE providers and organisations
Training delivered by community centres

All umbrella organisations which pass on data to the national data collection are required to provide a *training provider type classification* for each provider or organisation reporting through them. These classifications contain amongst others

- Adult education centres (AEC's) which are providers who identify themselves as ACE providers and organisations and have a primary focus on education and training (eg. Skillshares, Workers Education Centres), and
- Community access centres (CAC's) which are providers whose prime focus is the collective advancement of a specific profession (eg. The Australian Computer Society).

In the following and throughout the remainder of this report we will use the term "community centres" to describe both AEC's or CAC's.

Education and training delivered at community centres can be vocational and/or recreational (Figure 1.3).

Note that in 1998 more than 130 community centres have reported their education and training activity via umbrella organisations other than those for ACE providers and organisations. These community centres reported to the national data collection via NSW Private Providers, the Office of Training and Further Education in Victoria, Victoria Private Providers, the Western Australian Department of Training, Tasmania Private Providers and Northern Territory Private Providers.

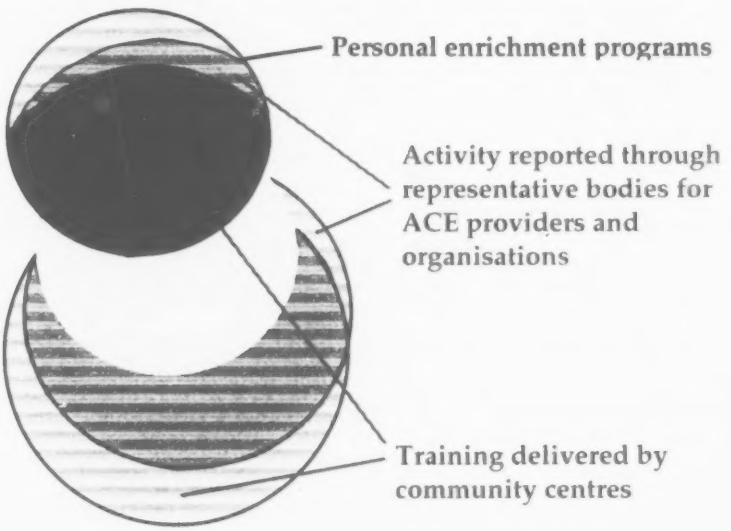
1.3 Personal enrichment education and training activity

Even though the primary purpose of the national database is to collect information on VET activity within Australia's publicly-funded VET sector, the collection also contains some data on recreation, leisure and personal enrichment education and training activity, so-called "stream-1000" education and training activity. Stream-1000 courses are directed towards the encouragement and development of creativity, social and personal pursuits as well as skills which enable people to make more effective use of leisure time. Although these courses are not designed to provide VET, they may include – in addition to content relating to handicrafts, hobbies, life skills and self expression – technical content such as welding, typing, basic computing, woodworking and agriculture.

Per se there is no requirement for personal enrichment programs to be reported to NCVER. However, for the following reasons some of the stream-1000 education and training activity is actually reported:

- Some stream-1000 activity is partly or wholly sponsored or supported by the States/Territories or the Commonwealth.
- education and training providers who offer both VET and stream-1000 activity, and who receive public funds for VET, report not only their VET activity but also their personal enrichment education and training activity to the national data collection.

Figure 1.4: Schematic illustration of that part of Australia's ACE sector which is defined by the program type


Personal enrichment programs
Activity reported through representative bodies for ACE providers and organisations
Training delivered by community centres

The distinction between personal enrichment and vocational programs is often problematical and has been dropped from the AVETMIS standard 3.0. From 1999, there is no longer a classification of courses in streams of study. This new reporting standard mainly accommodates for the move from courses and subjects to training packages and units of competency. Before 1999, the distinction between vocational and personal enrichment programs was based on the intention of the curriculum or the program only. It should be noted that the intention of the student was not taken into account.

ACE as reported to the national data collection in 1998

2.1 Entire ACE sector

Of the 1.87 million students whose 1998 education and training activity has been reported to the national data collection, almost 582 000, or 31.1%, can be associated with Australia's ACE sector. These 582 000 students either have been enrolled with providers who reported through representative bodies for ACE providers and organisations, attended courses at community centres, or undertook recreation, leisure and personal enrichment programs.

In total, the nationally reported ACE students accounted for more than 21.2 million education and training hours in 1998. This represents 6.6% of the reported total annual hours. Education and training associated with Australia's ACE sector and reported to NCVER has been delivered by almost 940 education and training providers and organisation.

The distribution of education and training providers and organisations, students and annual hours by State/Territory from the perspective of the national education and data collection is given in Table 2.1:

Table 2.1: Students participation in Australia's ACE sector, annual hours and number of education and training providers by State/Territory as reported to the national education and training data collection, 1998

State/ Territory	ACT	New South Wales	Northern Territory	Queensland	South Australia	Tasmania	Victoria	Western Australia	Australia
Students	600	251,600	1,400	42,900	28,200	22,100	203,200	32,000	**582,000**
Annual hours ('000)	22	6,681	133	712	583	792	11,349	935	**21,208**
Training providers	18	155	16	103	2	42	525	75	**936**

While since 1996 the number of students who studied within Australia's ACE sector and whose activity was reported to the national data collection declined (from 611 600 in 1996 to 585 800 in 1997 to 582 000 in 1998), the number of education and training hours increased (from 19.77 million in 1996 to 20.70 million in 1997 to 21.21 million in 1998). Module enrolments increased from 867 700 in 1996 to 932 400 in 1997 to 978 200 in 1998. However, course enrolments decreased from 817 600 in 1996 to 808 700 in 1997 to 793 600 in 1998.

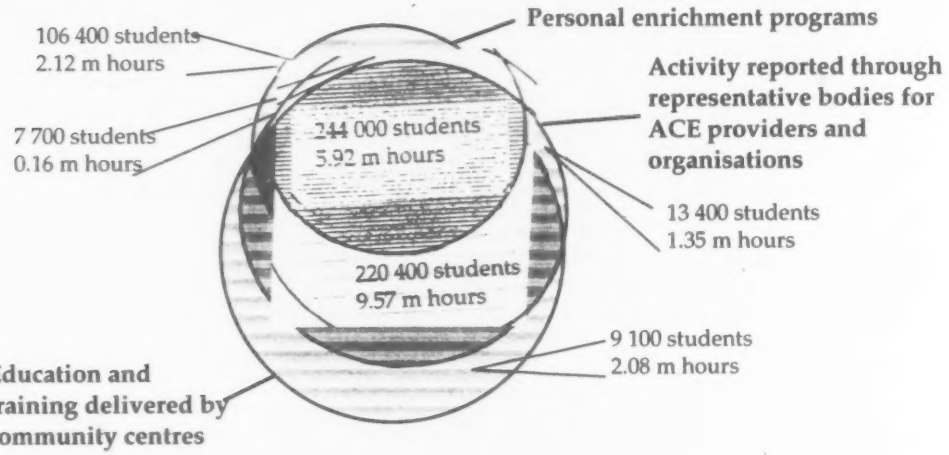
Separating the nationally reported ACE activity into the three parts as described above the following picture emerges:

- Umbrella organisations for ACE providers and organisations reported 17.01 million hours and 466 500 students in 1998.
- 17.57 million hours of training have been delivered to 454 600 students by providers who identify themselves as community centres.
- Personal enrichment programs accounted for 358 200 students and 8.21 million hours.[2]

[2] A detailed analysis of stream-1000 training program activity can be found in NCVER's publication *Australian personal enrichment education and training programs 1998 – an overview*.

However, these sectors are not at all disjunct sets as Figure 2.1 illustrates[3]. Particularly the overlap between the activity reported through representative bodies for ACE providers and organisations and the education and training delivered by community centres is material: 95.5% of those students whose education and training activities were reported by ACE provider umbrella organisations were enrolled with community centres, and 98.0% of those students who undertook their education and training at community centres were reported to the national data collection by representative bodies for ACE providers and organisations.

Figure 2.1: Training activity in Australia's ACE sector in 1998 from perspective of national data collection



244 000 students accounting for 5.92 million hours were enrolled in personal enrichment activity delivered by community centres and reported through representative bodies for ACE providers and organisations. This education and training activity made up

- 54.8% of students enrolled with and 34.8% of annual hours reported by umbrella organisations for ACE providers and organisations
- 53.7% of students undertaking education and training at community centres and 33.7% of annual hours delivered there
- 68.1% of students undertaking personal enrichment programs and 72.2% of annual hours delivered in stream-1000 courses.

It should be emphasised that all figures reported throughout this document are based on information from the national education and data collection only.

NCVER estimates, very approximately, that in 1998 1.2 million to 1.4 million people, or 8.0% to 9.5% of Australia's adult population, were enrolled in some form of ACE. This ACE activity amounted to an estimated 25 million to 30 million hours of education and training.

[3] For illustrative purposes the areas of the circles that represent the different parts of Australia's ACE sector, and the areas of the overlapping regions are *not* proportional to the student numbers and/or the annual hours. Further, student numbers shown for the segments defined by the activity reported through representative bodies for ACE providers and organisations and the training delivered by community centres do not add to the total quoted in this section since some students were enrolled in both VET and stream-1000 programs.

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Figure 2.1 shows that it is best to discuss **six distinct segments of the Australian ACE sector** from the perspective of the national education and training data collection:

1. Education and training activity that results from personal enrichment programs provided by community centres and reported through umbrella organisations for ACE providers and organisations. It accounted for 244 000 students and 5.92 million education and training hours in 1998.
2. VET delivered at community centres and reported by representative bodies for ACE providers and organisations accounting for 220 400 students and 9.57 million hours of education and training in 1998.
3. Personal enrichment programs delivered by providers other than community centres but reported through ACE provider umbrella organisations. This education and training activity amounted in 7 700 students and 162 900 hours of education and training in 1998.
4. Personal enrichment programs provided by education and training providers other than community centres and reported through umbrella organisations other than representative bodies for ACE providers and organisations. This activity accounted for 106 400 students and 2.12 million education and training hours in 1998.
5. VET delivered by community centres which report through organisations other than ACE provider umbrella organisations. This activity accounted for 9 100 students and 2.08 million hours of education and training.
6. VET delivered by providers who are not community centres but report through representative bodies for ACE providers and organisations. This activity makes up 13 400 students and 1.35 million hours of education and training in 1998.

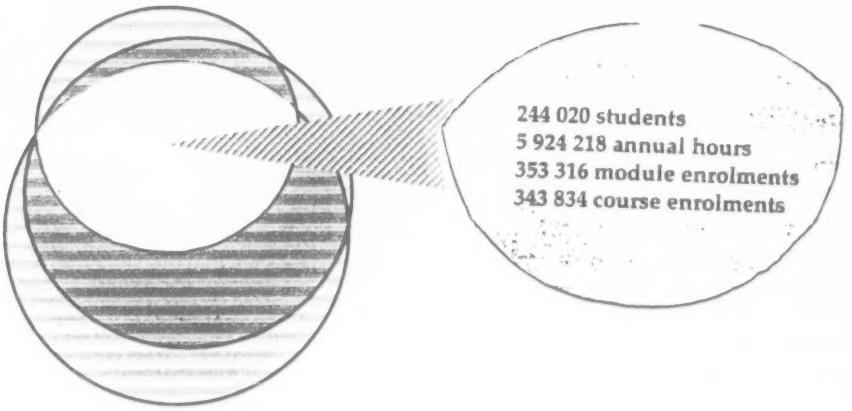
It is interesting to note that stream-1000 programs delivered by community centres have been reported through ACE provider umbrella organisations only. Community centres which report through TAFE institute or private provider umbrella organisations did not report any personal enrichment education and training activity to NCVER in 1998.

In the following sections we will summarise the education and training activity in these six different segments of Australia's ACE sector from the perspective of the national data collection.

2.2 First segment of the nationally reported ACE sector – Personal enrichment programs delivered by community centres and reported through ACE provider umbrella organisations

In 1998, stream-1000 programs delivered by community centres and reported to the national data collection through ACE provider umbrella organisations accounted for 244 000 students, 5.92 million annual hours, 353 300 module enrolments, and 343 800 course enrolments (Figure 2.2).

Figure 2.2: Personal enrichment education and training activity delivered by community centres and reported through umbrella organisation for ACE providers and organisations in 1998



This part of Australia's ACE sectors comprises

- 13.0% of students,
- 1.8% of annual hours,
- 3.1% of module enrolments and
- 14.3% of course enrolments

reported to the national data collection in 1998.

Of Australia's ACE sector (as covered in the national VET provider database) personal enrichment programs delivered by community centres and reported through major stakeholders for ACE providers and organisations made up

- 41.9% of students,
- 27.9% of annual hours,
- 36.1% of module enrolments and
- 43.3% of course enrolments

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Only New South Wales, Tasmania and Victoria reported education and training activity in this segment of Australia's ACE sector (Table 2.2).

Table 2.2: Students participation, annual hours and number of education and training providers in the first segment of Australia's ACE sector by State/Territory, 1998

State/ Territory	ACT	New South Wales	Northern Territory	Queensland	South Australia	Tasmania	Victoria	Western Australia	Australia
Students	0	151,408	0	0	0	11,800	80,800	0	**244,000**
Annual hours ('000)	0	2,893	0	0	0	334	2,697	0	**5,924**
Training providers	0	77	0	0	0	6	266	0	**349**

Student profile

- In 1998, more than 244 000 students were enrolled in personal enrichment programs delivered by community centres and reported by ACE provider umbrella organisations. This indicates that at least 1.7% of Australia's working age residents (15 to 64 year olds) were enrolled in this kind of personal enrichment programs.
- The apparent decrease in student numbers is 23 700, or 8.8%, since 1997, and 41 900, or 14.6%, since 1996.
- More than three quarters of students are female (Table 2.3).
- Personal enrichment programs provided by community centres and reported by representative bodies for ACE providers and organisations are undertaken by all age groups.
- In particular older persons take advantage of the stream-1000 programs offered (Table 2.4). The median age of the students is 41.5 years, 6.9 years higher than that of the Australian population in 1998, 13.1 years higher than that of VET students in Australia's publicly-funded VET sector in 1998 and even 19.7 years higher than that of students in Australia's higher education sector.
- The distributions of male and female students across the age groups are broadly the same (Table 2.3).

Table 2.3: Student participation in the first segment of the nationally reported ACE sector by age and sex, 1998

Age	% males	% females	% unknown sex	% students
15 to 19	2.5	1.8	0.9	1.9
20 to 24	4.0	4.6	1.2	4.4
25 to 39	24.6	25.9	7.1	25.3
40 to 64	32.9	33.3	11.4	32.8
Other ages	10.1	8.4	3.1	8.6
Unknown	25.8	26.1	76.2	26.9
Total (%)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
% students	21.2	77.1	1.7	100.0
Total ('000)	**51.7**	**188.3**	**4.1**	**244.0**

Figure 2.3: Cumulative frequency distribution of students enrolled in personal enrichment programs with community centres reporting through ACE provider umbrella organisations, 1998

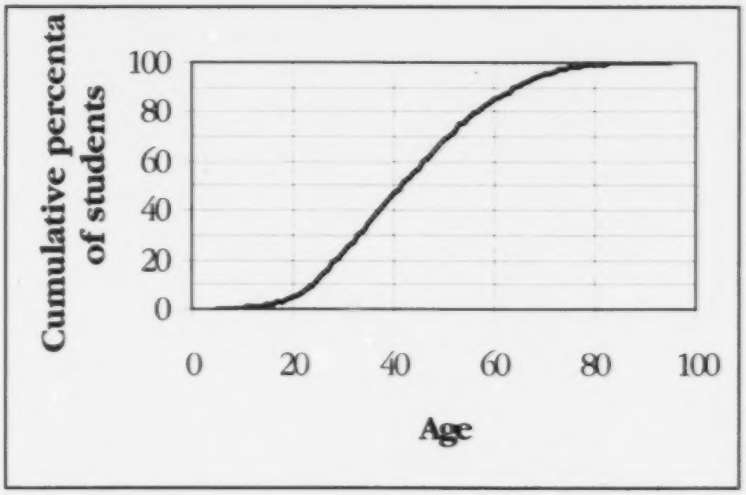


Table 2.4: Student participation and distribution of total annual hours in the first segment of the nationally reported ACE sector by sex and age group, 1998

	% students	% annual hours	Average hours
Sex			
Male	21.2	18.5	21.2
Female	77.1	80.2	25.2
Unknown sex	1.7	1.3	18.8
Total (%)	100.0	100.0	24.3
Age			
15 to 19 years	1.9	1.3	16.5
20 to 24 years	4.4	3.1	17.1
25 to 39 years	25.3	20.2	19.4
40 to 64 years	32.8	35.0	25.9
Other ages	8.6	14.7	41.3
Unknown age	26.9	25.6	23.1
Total (%)	100.0	100.0	24.3
Total ('000)	**244.0**	**5,924**	

How much education and training?

- Community centres which report through umbrella organisations for ACE providers and organisations delivered a total of 5.92 million hours of personal enrichment education and training in 1998. This represents 27.9% of annual hours delivered within Australia's ACE sector in 1998 and reported to the national VET collection.
- Students who were enrolled in the first segment of the nationally reported ACE sector averaged 24.3 hours each (females: 25.2 hours, males: 21.2 hours).
- Older people undertake more hours in the segment of the nationally reported ACE sector considered here. Students aged 65 and over averaged 43.9 hours each with 40 to 64 year olds averaging 25.9 hours, 25 to 39 year olds 19.4 hours and 15 to 24 year olds 16.9 hours (table 0.4).

- Personal enrichment courses which are delivered by community centres reporting through representative bodies for ACE providers and organisations are very short with more than half of the students (54.8%) undertaking equal or less than 13 hours of education and training.

Source of funding

- More than half (about 55%) of the annual hours are funded on a fee-for-service basis with the costs of the education and training place paid by the student or an agency on behalf of the student[4].
- Less than half (45%) of the annual hours are funded from recurrent State and Territory allocations and Commonwealth funds disbursed by the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA).

What courses?

- Course enrolments in the described segment of Australia's ACE sectors declined over the past two years. While in 1996, 381 600 personal enrichment courses were undertaken at community centres which report through umbrella organisations for ACE providers this number decreased to 369 700 in 1997 and 343 800 in 1998.
- Most of the courses (98.2%) are one-subject courses accounting for 96.2% of annual hours.
- The most popular courses are in the art, humanities and social sciences field of study which account for 45.6% of course enrolments and 50.0% of annual hours in 1998. Other popular fields are health and community services (23.3% of course enrolments and 20.1% of annual hours) and VET multi-field education with 10.5% of enrolments and 14.6% of annual hours (Table 2.5).

Table 2.5: Course enrolments and annual hours in the first segment of the nationally reported Australian ACE sector by field of study, 1998

Field of study	% course enrolments	% annual hours
Land and marine resources, animal husbandry	2.6	1.8
Architecture, building	3.4	2.9
Art, humanities and social sciences	45.6	50.0
Business, administration, economics	2.4	1.3
Education	0.5	0.2
Engineering, surveying	2.8	2.5
Health, community services	23.3	20.1
Law, legal studies	0.2	0.1
Science	3.4	3.0
Veterinary science, animal care	0.0	0.0
Services, hospitality, transportation	5.3	3.5
VET – multi-field education	10.5	14.6
Total (%)	100.0	100.0
Total ('000)	**343.8**	**5,924**

[4] Based on 4.79 million annual hours for which the funding sources are known.

What subjects?

- Module enrolments also experienced negative growth over the past two years. In 1998, 353 300 personal enrichment subjects were undertaken at community centres which report through ACE provider umbrella organisations, 6.3% less than in 1997 (377 100) and 7.6% less than in 1996 (382 400).
- The most popular subjects are in the hospitality, tourism and personal services discipline group which account for 33.2% of module enrolments and 33.4% of annual hours in 1998. Other popular areas of learning are visual and performing (30.6% of module enrolments and 29.5% of annual hours) and humanities with 9.4% of enrolments and 8.1% of annual hours (table 2.6).
- Only 0.04% of modules and 0.03% of annual hours are delivered in correspondence mode.

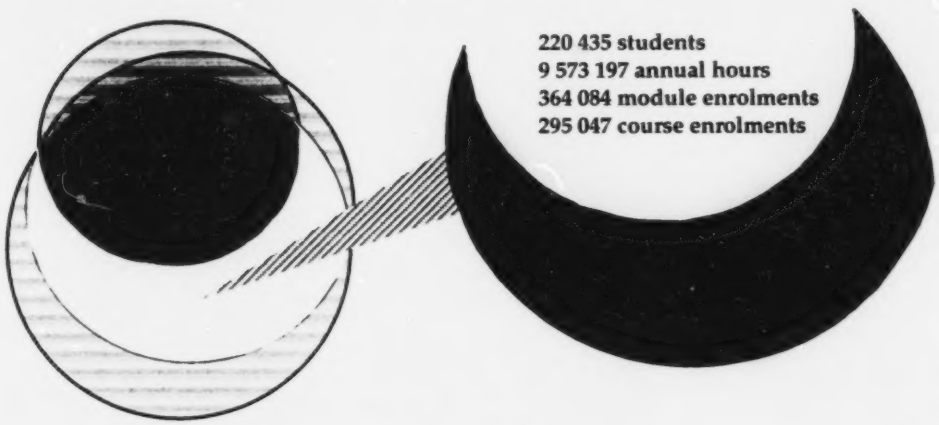
Table 2.6: Module enrolments and annual hours in the first segment of the nationally reported ACE sector by area of learning, 1998

Area of learning	% module enrolments	% annual hours
Humanities	9.4	8.1
Social studies	1.4	1.0
Education	4.2	11.2
Sciences	1.3	1.1
Mathematics, computing	2.5	2.0
Visual/performing arts	30.6	29.5
Engineering processing	2.1	1.7
Health sciences	3.2	3.0
Administration, business, economics, law	2.3	1.1
Built environment	3.4	3.0
Agriculture, renewable resources	3.1	2.0
Hospitality, tourism and personal services	33.2	33.4
Social, educational and employment skills	3.3	2.9
Total (%)	100.0	100.0
Total ('000)	**353.3**	**5,924**

2.3 Second segment of the nationally reported ACE sector – VET programs delivered at community centres and reported through ACE provider umbrella organisations

In 1998, vocational education and training programs delivered by community centres which report through representative bodies for ACE providers and organisations accounted for 220 400 students, 9.57 million annual hours, 364 100 module enrolments, and 295 000 course enrolments (Figure 2.4).

Figure 2.4: Vocational education and training activity delivered by community centres and reported through ACE provider umbrella organisations, 1998



This segment of Australia's nationally reported ACE sector comprises

- 11.8% of students,
- 3.0% of annual hours,
- 3.2% of module enrolments and
- 15.1% of course enrolments

reported to the national data collection in 1998.

Of Australia's ACE sector (as covered in the national VET provider database) VET programs delivered by community centres and reported through major stakeholders for ACE providers and organisations made up

- 37.9% of students,
- 45.1% of annual hours,
- 37.2% of module enrolments and
- 34.4% of course enrolments

Only the ACT, New South Wales, South Australia, Tasmania and Victoria reported VET activity in the second segment of Australia's ACE sector (Table 2.7). Actually, all of the ACT's reported ACE activity is VET delivered at community centres and reported through ACT ACE.

Table 2.7: Students participation in the second segment of Australia's nationally reported ACE sector, annual hours and number of education and training providers by State/Territory, 1998

State/ Territory	ACT	New South Wales	Northern Territory	Queensland	South Australia	Tasmania	Victoria	Western Australia	Australia
Students	600	106,400	0	0	21,900	300	91,300	0	**220,400**
Annual hours ('000)	22	3,185	0	0	300	2	6,064	0	**9,573**
Training providers	18	82	0	0	2	5	361	0	**468**

Numbers may not add due to rounding.

Student profile

In 1998, more than 220 400 students were enrolled in VET programs delivered by community centres which report through representative bodies for ACE providers and organisations. This indicates that at least 1.6% of Australia's working age residents (15 to 64 year olds) were enrolled in this kind of personal enrichment programs.

The apparent growth in student numbers is 4 400, or 2.0%, since 1997, and 20 200, or 10.1%, since 1996.

More than two thirds of students are female (Table 2.8).

Vocational programs provided by community centres and reported through ACE provider umbrella organisations attract students across all age groups (Table 2.8). It is worthwhile noting that students aged 65 or higher (and hence above what is considered the working age) make up 4.8% of the students (Figure 2.5). This indicates that VET is not necessarily undertaken for work-related purposes only.

The students' median age is 37.9 years (Figure 2.5), 3.3 years higher than that of the Australian population in 1998, 9.5 years higher than that of VET students in Australia's publicly-funded VET sector in 1998 and 17.5 years higher than that of university students.

The participation patterns for males and females across the age groups are broadly similar (Table 2.8). However, in the male cohort there is a significant greater likelihood for students being younger than 20 years or older than 54 than in the female cohort. Persons younger than 20 comprise 8.9% of male students (6.2% of female students) and persons older than 54 years make up 17.1% of male students (12.3% of female students, Figure 2.6).

Table 2.8: Student participation in the second segment of the nationally reported ACE sector by age and sex, 1998

Age	% males	% females	% unknown sex	% students
15 to 19	6.8	4.9	2.9	5.5
20 to 24	7.0	7.9	2.8	7.5
25 to 39	30.5	33.0	8.9	31.8
40 to 64	34.8	37.2	8.7	35.9
Other ages	7.5	4.4	1.6	5.3
Unknown	13.4	12.5	75.2	13.9
Total (%)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
% students	31.2	67.0	1.8	100.0
Total ('000)	**68.8**	**147.7**	**4.0**	**220.4**

Figure 2.5: Cumulative frequency distribution of students enrolled in VET programs with community centres which report through ACE provider umbrella organisations, 1998

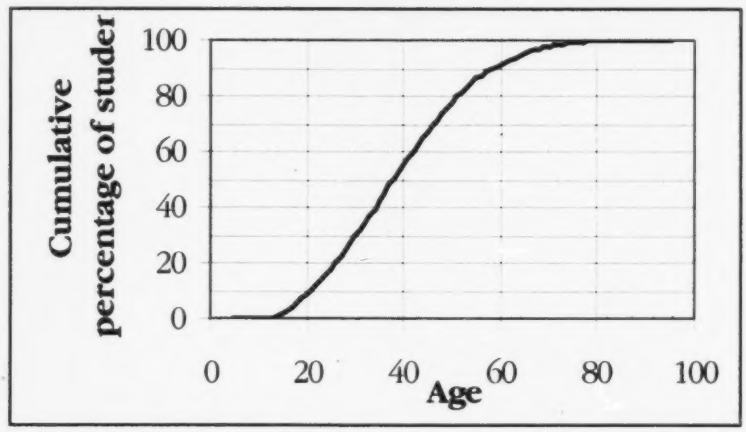


Figure 2.6: Cumulative frequency distribution of male and female students enrolled in the second segment of Australia's nationally reported ACE sector, 1998

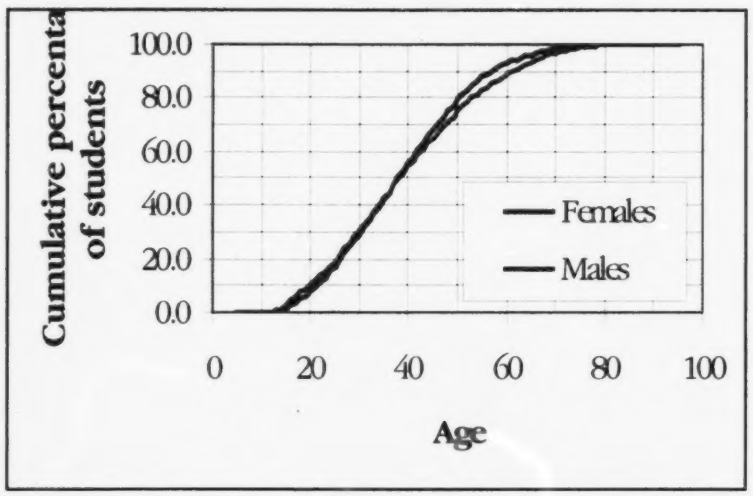


Table 2.9: Student participation and distribution of total annual hours in the second segment of the nationally reported ACE sector by sex and age group

	% students	% annual hours	Average hours
Sex			
Male	31.2	31.6	44.0
Female	67.0	67.2	43.6
Unknown sex	1.8	1.2	28.6
Total (%)	100.0	100.0	43.4
Age			
15 to 19 years	5.5	8.7	69.1
20 to 24 years	7.5	9.7	56.1
25 to 39 years	31.8	32.9	44.9
40 to 64 years	35.9	34.6	41.8
Other ages	5.3	4.8	39.1
Unknown age	13.9	9.2	28.7
Total (%)	100.0	100.0	43.4
Total ('000)	**220.4**	**9,573**	

How much education and training?

- Community centres which report through major stakeholders for ACE providers and organisations delivered a total of 9.57 million hours of VET in 1998. This represents 45.1% of annual hours delivered within Australia's nationally reported ACE sector.
- Students enrolled in the second segment of Australia's nationally reported ACE sector averaged 43.4 hours each (females: 43.6 hours, males: 44.0 hours, Table 2.9). This is significantly lower than the average annual hours per student (204 hours) in Australia's publicly-funded VET sector in 1998.
- Young people undertake more hours than older people in the segment of the nationally reported ACE sector considered here. Students aged 15 to 19 averaged 61.9 hours each with 20 to 24 year olds averaging 56.1 hours and 25 to 39 year olds 44.9 hours (Table 2.9).
- VET courses delivered in the segment of the nationally reported ACE sector under consideration are short with more than half of the students (56.9%) undertaking equal or less than 16 hours of education and training.

Source of funding

- Most of the annual hours (87.3%) are funded from recurrent State and Territory allocations for VET and Commonwealth funds disbursed by the Australian National Training Authority.
- About a tenth (9.8%) of the annual hours are funded on a fee-for-service basis with the costs of the education and training place paid by the student or an agency on behalf of the student.
- The remainder of hours (2.9%) are funded from State/Territory and Commonwealth specific purpose allocations for VET.

Table 2.10: Course enrolments and annual hours in the second segment of the nationally reported ACE sector by field of study, 1998

Field of study	% course enrolments	% annual hours
Land and marine resources, animal husbandry	1.5	1.3
Architecture, building	0.9	0.6
Art, humanities and social sciences	15.3	10.8
Business, administration, economics	18.3	14.8
Education	2.6	2.3
Engineering, surveying	0.9	1.4
Health, community services	8.0	8.7
Law, legal studies	0.1	0.0
Science	18.0	7.2
Veterinary science, animal care	0.0	0.0
Services, hospitality, transportation	3.1	3.4
VET – multi-field education	31.4	49.6
Total (%)	100.0	100.0
Total ('000)	**273.3**	**9,277**

What courses?

- Course enrolments in the described segment of Australia's nationally reported ACE sector increased slightly by 5 000, or 1.9%, from 268 300 in 1996 to 273 300 in 1998. However, in the past year this ACE segment experienced a slight decrease of 6 500, or 2.3%.
- Most of the courses (95.5%) are one-subject courses accounting for 73.9% of annual hours.
- The most popular courses are in the VET multi-field education field of study which account for 31.4% of course enrolments and 49.6% of annual hours in 1998. This is an important area of VET activity as it includes many general and preparatory courses which provide a foundation for further study in more specifically vocational fields. Other popular fields are business, administration and economics (18.3% of course enrolments and 14.8% of annual hours) and science with 18.0% of enrolments and 7.2% of annual hours (Table 2.10).

What subjects?

- Module enrolments experienced significant growth over the past two years. In 1998, 364 100 VET subjects were undertaken at community centres which report through representative bodies for ACE providers and organisations, 7.8% more than in 1997 (337 700) and 31.5% more than in 1996 (276 820).
- The growth from 1996 to 1997 is mainly due to a rescoping Australia's publicly-funded VET sector. While in 1996 a large part of module-enrolment-only activity undertaken with community education and training organisations was reported as personal enrichment programs, from 1997 this activity was included in VET. In 1996, none of the VET activity in the second segment of the nationally reported ACE sector was module-enrolment-only, while in 1997 20 400 subjects and in 1998 21 700 subjects were reported as module-enrolment-only.
- About half of education and training activity (44% of subject enrolments and 52% of annual hours) resulted in a successful completion:
  - 23.7% of module enrolments and 26.9% of annual hours were reported in a successful subject completion.
  - 20.7% of module enrolments and 24.6% of annual hours were reported as 'student not assessed – satisfactory completion of class hours'.
- In 1998 the most popular subjects were in the hospitality, tourism and personal services discipline group which account for 33.2% of module enrolments and 33.4% of annual

hours in 1998. Other popular areas of learning are visual and performing (30.6% of module enrolments and 29.5% of annual hours) and humanities with 9.4% of enrolments and 8.1% of annual hours (2.11).

- About 0.1% of modules and annual hours are delivered in correspondence mode.

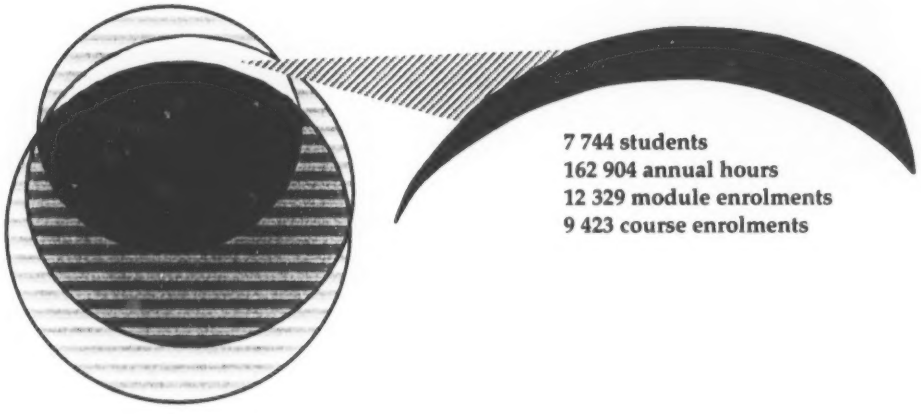
Table 2.11: Module enrolments and annual hours in the second segment of the nationally reported ACE sector by area of learning, 1998

Area of learning	% module enrolments	% annual hours
Humanities	12.6	11.6
Social studies	1.0	1.5
Education	2.6	2.9
Sciences	0.8	0.6
Mathematics, computing	24.7	14.0
Visual/performing arts	5.0	4.1
Engineering processing	1.1	0.7
Health sciences	8.8	8.2
Administration, business, economics, law	12.5	10.6
Built environment	0.9	0.6
Agriculture, renewable resources	2.9	2.3
Hospitality, tourism and personal services	5.4	2.8
Social, educational and employment skills	21.5	40.2
Total (%)	100.0	100.0
Total ('000)	**364.1**	**9,573**

2.4 Third segment of the nationally reported ACE sector – personal enrichment programs delivered by providers other than community centres but reported through ACE provider umbrella organisations

In 1998, personal enrichment education and training programs delivered by providers other than community centres which report through ACE provider umbrella organisations accounted for 7 700 students, 162 900 annual hours, 12 300 module enrolments, and 9 400 course enrolments (Figure 2.7).

Figure 2.7: Stream-1000 programs delivered by education and training providers which do not identify themselves as community centres but report through major stakeholders for ACE providers and organisations, 1998



This segment of Australia's ACE sector comprises

- 0.4% of students,
- 0.1% of annual hours,
- 0.1% of module enrolments and
- 0.4% of course enrolments

reported to the national data collection in 1998.

Of Australia's ACE sector (as covered in the national VET provider database) personal enrichment programs delivered by education and training providers other than community centres but reporting through representative bodies for ACE providers and organisations made up

- 1.3% of students,
- 0.8% of annual hours,
- 1.3% of module enrolments and
- 1.2% of course enrolments

Only Tasmania reported education and training activity in this segment of Australia's ACE sector (Table 2.12). The education and training activity took place at TAFE institutes which reported through Tasmania ACE and AMES as well as through Numeracy and Literacy Tasmania.

Table 2.12: Students participation in the third segment of Australia's ACE sector, annual hours and number of education and training providers by State/Territory, 1998

State/ Territory	ACT	New South Wales	Northern Territory	Queensland	South Australia	Tasmania	Victoria	Western Australia	Australia
Students	0	0	0	0	0	7,700	0	0	**7,700**
Annual hours ('000)	0	0	0	0	0	163	0	0	**163**
Training providers	0	0	0	0	0	22	0	0	**22**

Student profile

- In 1998, more than 7 700 students were enrolled in personal enrichment programs delivered by providers other than community centres who reported through ACE provider umbrella organisations.
- This segment experienced large fluctuations of student numbers over the past years: In 1996, 17 700 students participated, and in 1997 the number dropped to 1 900.
- More than two thirds of students (70.6%) are female (Table 2.13).
- The age distribution of personal enrichment students enrolled with providers other than community centres who report through major stakeholders for ACE providers and organisations is fairly broad with less than 10% of students aged 15 to 24. The median age of the students is 40.6 years.
- Even though the age distributions for males and females are similar, male students, on average, tend to be older than male students (Figure 2.8). While the median age of females enrolled in this segment of Australia's ACE sector is 39.9 years, the median age for males is 2.8 years higher, namely 42.7. Persons older than 40 years However, in the male cohort there is a significant greater likelihood for students being younger than 20 years or older than 54 than in the female cohort. Persons younger than 20 comprise 8.9% of male students (6.2% of female students) and persons older than 54 years make up 17.1% of male students (12.3% of female students, Figure 2.8).

Table 2.13: Student participation in the third segment of the nationally reported ACE sector by age and sex, 1998

Age	% males	% females	% students
15 to 19	2.7	2.8	2.8
20 to 24	4.5	6.2	5.7
25 to 39	26.7	33.8	31.7
40 to 64	41.2	43.4	42.7
Other ages	9.7	6.1	7.1
Unknown	15.2	7.7	9.9
Total (%)	100.0	100.0	100.0
% students	29.4	70.6	100.0
Total ('000)	**2.3**	**5.5**	**7.7**

Figure 2.8: Cumulative frequency distribution of male and female students enrolled in personal enrichment programs with education and training providers other than community centres but reporting through ACE provider umbrella organisations, 1998

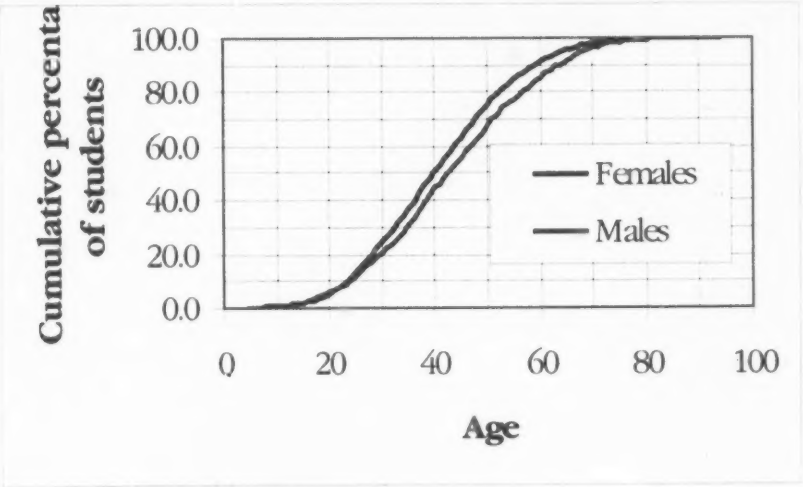


Table 2.14: Student participation and distribution of total annual hours in the third segment of the nationally reported ACE sector by sex and age group, 1998

	% students	% annual hours	Average hours
Sex			
Male	29.4	29.4	21.0
Female	70.6	70.6	21.0
Total (%)	100.0	100.0	21.0
Age			
15 to 19 years	2.8	3.1	23.5
20 to 24 years	5.7	6.3	23.3
25 to 39 years	31.7	30.6	20.3
40 to 64 years	42.7	44.2	21.8
Other ages	7.1	7.2	21.3
Unknown age	9.9	8.5	18.0
Total (%)	100.0	100.0	21.0
Total ('000)	**7.7**	**163**	

How much education and training?

- Education and training providers who do not identify themselves as community centres but who report through an ACE provider umbrella organisation delivered a total of 162 900 hours of personal enrichment education and training in 1998. This represents 0.8% of annual hours which was delivered within Australia's ACE sector and reported to the national VET provider collection.
- Students enrolled in this segment of the Australian ACE sector averaged 21 hours each. This finding is insensitive to the sex and age of the student (2.14).
- Personal enrichment courses delivered by providers other than community centres who report through representative bodies for ACE providers and organisations are very short with half the students (50.1%) undertaking equal or less than 11 hours of education and training.

Source of funding

- The source of funding for this segment of the nationally reported ACE sector is unknown.

What courses?

- In 1998 there were 9 400 course enrolments in the described segment of Australia's ACE sector.
- Most of the courses (78.1%) are one-subject courses accounting for 57.6% of annual hours. Two-subject courses make up 15.7% of course enrolments and 23.4% of annual hours.
- The most popular courses are in the art, humanities and social sciences field of study which account for 42.7% of course enrolments and 44.1% of annual hours in 1998. Other popular fields are science (25.5% of course enrolments and 30.2% of annual hours), health and community services with 13.8% of enrolments and 9.2% of annual hours, and business, administration and economics with 11.9% of enrolments and 10.6% of annual hours (Table 2.15).

Table 2.15: Course enrolments and annual hours in the third segment of the Australian ACE sector by field of study, 1998

Field of study	% course enrolments	% annual hours
Land and marine resources, animal husbandry	0.3	0.1
Architecture, building	0.0	0.0
Art, humanities and social sciences	42.7	44.1
Business, administration, economics	11.9	10.6
Education	0.1	0.1
Engineering, surveying	3.3	4.4
Health, community services	13.8	9.2
Law, legal studies	0.2	0.0
Science	25.5	30.2
Veterinary science, animal care	0.0	0.0
Services, hospitality, transportation	2.2	1.2
VET – multi-field education	0.0	0.0
Total (%)	100.0	100.0
Total ('000)	**9.4**	**163**

What subjects?

- In 1998 the third segment of Australia's ACE sector accounted for 12 300 module enrolments .
- In 1998 the most popular subjects were in the mathematics and computing discipline group which accounted for 26.2% of module enrolments and 29.6% of annual hours. Other popular areas of learning are visual and performing (25.1% of module enrolments and 25.3% of annual hours) and hospitality, tourism and personal services with 23.2% of enrolments and 17.0% of annual hours (2.16).
- None of the subjects and hours are delivered in correspondence mode.

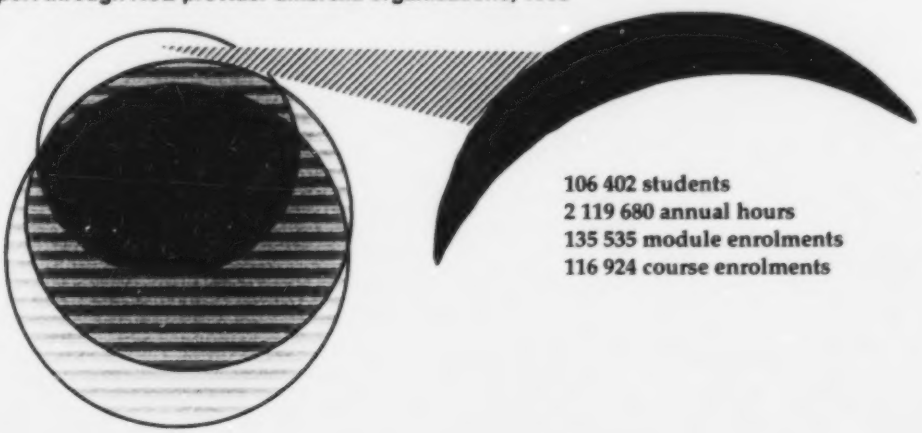
Table 2.16: Module enrolments and annual hours in the third segment of the ACE sector by area of learning, 1998

Area of learning	% module enrolments	% annual hours
Humanities	4.7	6.8
Social studies	0.2	0.2
Education	0.3	0.1
Sciences	0.6	0.2
Mathematics, computing	26.2	29.6
Visual/performing arts	25.1	25.3
Engineering processing	3.2	5.1
Health sciences	6.2	4.8
Administration, business, economics, law	3.2	4.4
Built environment	2.6	3.7
Agriculture, renewable resources	1.6	1.1
Hospitality, tourism and personal services	23.2	17.0
Social, educational and employment skills	3.0	1.8
Total (%)	100.0	100.0
Total ('000)	**12.3**	**163**

2.5 Fourth segment of the nationally reported ACE sector - Personal enrichment programs delivered by providers that are not community centres and do not report through ACE provider umbrella organisations

Education and training providers who are neither community centres nor education and training providers reporting through a ACE providers and organisations umbrella organisation delivered 2.12 million hours of personal enrichment education and training to 106 400 students in 135 500 modules and 116 900 courses (Figure 2.9).

Figure 2.9: Personal enrichment education and training activity delivered by education and training providers which do not identify themselves as community centres and do not report through ACE provider umbrella organisations, 1998



This segment of Australia's nationally reported ACE sector comprises

- 5.7% of students,
- 0.7% of annual hours,
- 1.2% of module enrolments and
- 4.8% of course enrolments

reported to the national data collection in 1998.

Of Australia's ACE sector (as covered in the national VET provider database) stream-1000 programs delivered by education and training providers other than community centres and not reporting through representative bodies for ACE providers and organisations made up

- 18.3% of students,
- 10.0% of annual hours,
- 13.9% of module enrolments and
- 14.7% of course enrolments

Of the Australian States/Territories only New South Wales, Queensland, Victoria and Western Australia reported education and training activity in this segment of the nationally reported ACE sector in 1998 (Table 2.17). Almost all of Queensland's and Western Australia's ACE activity took place in this segment.

Table 2.17: Students participation in the fourth segment of Australia's nationally reported ACE sector, annual hours and number of education and training providers by State/Territory, 1998

State/ Territory	ACT	New South Wales	Northern Territory	Queensland	South Australia	Tasmania	Victoria	Western Australia	Australia
Students	0	1,000	0	42,400	0	0	32,200	30,700	**106,400**
Annual hours ('000)	0	41	0	671	0	0	774	633	**2,120**
Training providers	0	19	0	97	0	0	65	58	**239**

Numbers may not add due to rounding.

Student profile

- In 1998, 106 400 students were enrolled in stream-1000 programs delivered by providers other than community centres who do not report through ACE provider umbrella organisations. This indicates that at least 0.8% of Australia's working age residents (15 to 64 year olds) were enrolled in this kind of personal enrichment programs.
- The apparent decrease in student numbers is 3 700, or 3.3%, since 1997, and 16 200, or 13.2%, since 1996.
- About 60% of students are female (Table 2.19).
- Students of all age groups participate in personal enrichment programs provided in this segment of the nationally reported ACE sector (Table 2.18).
- The median age of students in the segment of the nationally reported ACE sector considered is 35.4 years (Figure 2.10), which compares with that of the Australian population in 1998 (34.6 years), 9.5 years higher than that of VET students in Australia's publicly-funded VET sector in 1998 and 17.5 years higher than that of university students.
- Male and female participation patterns across the age groups are broadly similar (Table 2.18). However, in the male cohort there is a greater likelihood for students being older than 50 years than in the female cohort. Persons older than 50 comprise 18.9% of male students but only 14.3% of female students (Figure 2.11).

Table 2.18: Student participation in the fourth segment of the nationally reported ACE sector by age and sex, 1998

Age	% males	% females	% unknown sex	% students
15 to 19	6.2	4.9	4.9	5.4
20 to 24	9.5	11.1	14.0	10.7
25 to 39	35.7	38.2	40.0	37.4
40 to 64	36.6	36.8	31.7	36.4
Other ages	4.6	2.5	1.4	3.2
Unknown	7.5	6.5	7.9	6.9
Total (%)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
% students	36.1	58.2	5.7	100.0
Total ('000)	**38.4**	**61.9**	**6.1**	**106.4**

Figure 2.10: Cumulative frequency distribution of students enrolled in personal enrichment programs with providers who are neither community centres nor report through major stakeholders for ACE providers and organisations, 1998

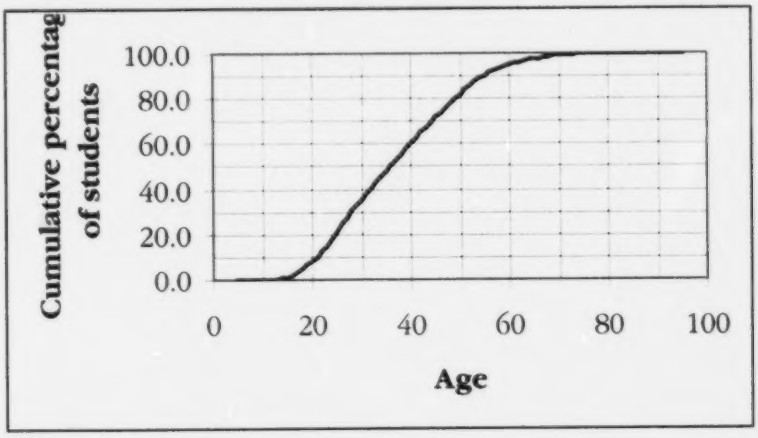


Figure 2.11: Cumulative frequency distribution of male and female students enrolled in the fourth segment of the nationally reported ACE sector, 1998

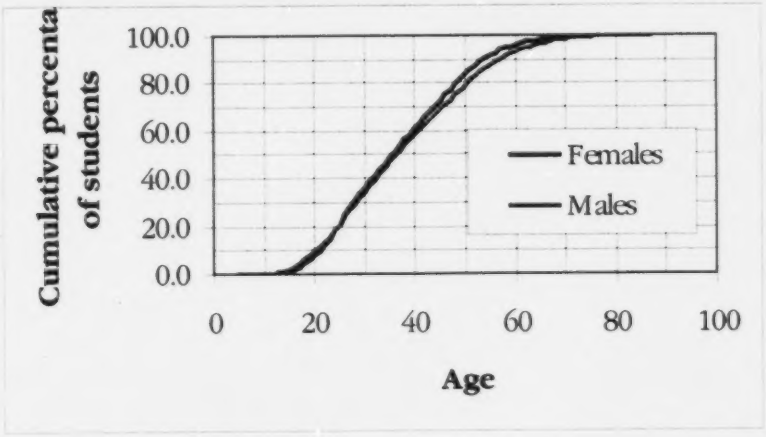


Table 2.19: Student participation and distribution of total annual hours in the fourth segment of the nationally reported ACE sector by sex and age group

	% students	% annual hours	Average hours
Sex			
Male	36.1	35.9	19.8
Female	58.2	58.5	20.0
Unknown sex	5.7	5.6	19.5
Total (%)	100.0	100.0	19.9
Age			
15 to 19 years	5.4	7.5	27.7
20 to 24 years	10.7	12.2	22.9
25 to 39 years	37.4	36.7	19.5
40 to 64 years	36.4	34.4	18.9
Other ages	3.2	3.3	20.3
Unknown age	6.9	5.9	16.8
Total (%)	100.0	100.0	19.9
Total ('000)	**106.4**	**2,120**	

How much education and training?

- Education and training providers which are neither community centres nor report through ACE provider umbrella organisations delivered a total of 2.12 million hours of personal enrichment education and training in 1998. This represents 10.0% of annual hours delivered within Australia's ACE sector and reported to the national VET provider collection.
- Students enrolled in this segment of the nationally reported ACE sector averaged 19.9 hours each (females: 20.0 hours, males: 19.8 hours, Table 2.19). This is similar to the average annual hours per student (23 hours) enrolled in sream-1000 programs in Australia.
- Young people undertake more hours in the segment of the nationally reported ACE sector considered here. Students aged 15 to 19 averaged 27.7 hours each with 20 to 24 year olds averaging 22.9 hours and 25 to 39 year olds 19.5 hours (Table 2.19).
- Personal enrichment courses delivered by education and training providers other than community centres and not reporting through representative bodies for ACE providers and organisations are short with more than half of the students (55.2%) undertaking equal or less than 15 hours of education and training.

Source of funding

- Most of the annual hours (98.2%) are funded from on a fee-for-service basis with the costs of the education and training place paid by the student or an agency on behalf of the student.
- The remainder (1.8%) of the annual hours are funded recurrent State and Territory allocations for VET and Commonwealth funds disbursed by the Australian National Training Authority.

What courses?

- Course enrolments in the described segment of Australia's ACE sector declined by 14 400, or 11.0%, from 131 300 in 1996 to 116 900 in 1998. This decrease slowed down in the past year with course enrolment numbers dropping by 1 000, or 0.8% since 1997.
- Most of the courses (90.1%) are one-subject courses accounting for 75.1% of annual hours. Two-subject courses account for 7.5% of course enrolments and 12.9% of annual hours.

- The most popular courses are in the VET multi-field education field of study which account for 37.6% of course enrolments and 39.6% of annual hours in 1998. Other popular fields are art humanities and social sciences (16.4% of enrolments and 15.6% of annual hours) business, administration and economics (16.4% of course enrolments and 13.2% of annual hours) and science (12.2% of enrolments and 14.9% of annual hours, Table 2.20).

Table 2.20: Nationally reported course enrolments and annual hours in the fourth segment of the Australian ACE sector by field of study, 1998

Field of study	% course enrolments	% annual hours
Land and marine resources, animal husbandry	1.0	1.2
Architecture, building	4.0	4.5
Art, humanities and social sciences	16.4	15.6
Business, administration, economics	16.4	13.2
Education	0.2	0.2
Engineering, surveying	2.5	2.0
Health, community services	12.2	14.9
Law, legal studies	0.0	0.0
Science	1.9	1.7
Veterinary science, animal care	0.2	0.1
Services, hospitality, transportation	7.7	6.9
VET – multi-field education	37.6	39.6
Total (%)	100.0	100.0
Total ('000)	**116.9**	**2,120**

What subjects?

- Module enrolments also show an apparent decrease over the past two years. In 1998, 135 500 personal enrichment subjects were undertaken with providers other than community centres and reporting through major stakeholders for ACE providers and organisations, 3.0% less than in 1997 (139 700) and 13.4% less than in 1996 (156 500).
- In 1998 the most popular subjects were in the hospitality, tourism and personal services discipline group which account for 47.0% of module enrolments and 40.9% of annual hours in 1998. Other popular areas of learning are education (10.9% of module enrolments and 14.6% of annual hours) and mathematics and computing with 10.1% of enrolments and 8.2% of annual hours (Table 2.21).
- About 1.0% of modules and 1.5% of annual hours are delivered in correspondence mode.

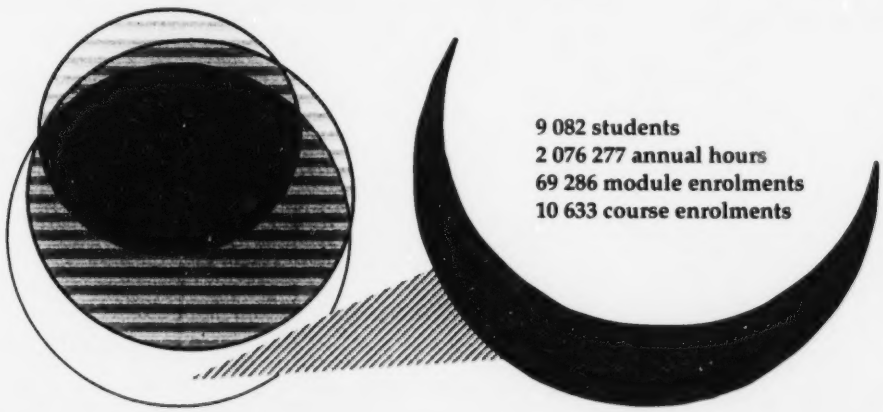
Table 2.21: Module enrolments and annual hours in the first segment of the nationally reported ACE sector by area of learning, 1998

Area of learning	% module enrolments	% annual hours
Humanities	7.2	7.4
Social studies	0.1	0.1
Education	10.9	14.6
Sciences	0.5	0.5
Mathematics, computing	10.1	8.2
Visual/performing arts	7.8	8.7
Engineering processing	2.1	3.1
Health sciences	1.1	2.0
Administration, business, economics, law	3.2	3.5
Built environment	5.0	6.0
Agriculture, renewable resources	1.7	2.0
Hospitality, tourism and personal services	47.0	40.9
Social, educational and employment skills	3.3	3.1
Total (%)	100.0	100.0
Total ('000)	**135.5**	**2,120**

2.6 Fifth segment of the nationally reported ACE sector – VET programs delivered by community centres which do not report through ACE provider umbrella organisations

In 1998, community centres not reporting through representative bodies for ACE providers and organisations delivered VET to 9 100 students and accounted for 2.08 million annual hours, 69 300 module enrolments, and 10 600 course enrolments (Figure 2.12)[5].

Figure 2.12: Vocational education and training activity delivered by community centres not reporting through ACE provider umbrella organisations, 1998



This segment of Australia's ACE sector comprises

- 0.5% of students,
- 0.6% of annual hours,
- 0.6% of module enrolments and
- 0.4% of course enrolments

reported to the national data collection in 1998.

Of Australia's ACE sector (as covered in the national VET provider database) VET programs delivered by community centres not reporting through ACE provider umbrella organisations made up

- 1.6% of students,
- 9.8% of annual hours,
- 7.1% of module enrolments and
- 1.3% of course enrolments

[5] Due to data quality issues caution should be exercised when interpreting the information reported for this segment of the nationally reported ACE sector.

The number of students, annual hours and education and training providers in this segment of the nationally reported ACE sector by State/Territory is given in Table 2.22. The ACT, Queensland and South Australia did not report any ACE activity in the segment of the nationally reported ACE sector considered here.

Table 2.22: Students participation in the fifth segment of Australia's nationally reported ACE sector, annual hours and number of education and training providers by State/Territory, 1998

State/ Territory	ACT	New South Wales	Northern Territory	Queensland	South Australia	Tasmania	Victoria	Western Australia	Australia
Students	0	1,500	400	0	0	200	5,600	1,300	**9,100**
Annual hours ('000)	0	562	90	0	0	70	1,052	302	**2,076**
Training providers	0	52	13	0	0	6	44	17	**132**

Numbers may not add due to rounding.

Student profile

- In 1998, slightly less than 9 100 students were enrolled in VET programs delivered by community centres not reporting through representative bodies for ACE providers and organisations.
- This fifth segment of Australia's ACE sector experienced dramatic increase over the past two years. While in 1996 slightly more than 2 000 students were enrolled with community centres not reporting through a ACE provider umbrella organisation this number almost tripled to 5 600 in 1997 and then increased by a further 3 500, or 62.1%, to 9 100.
- The majority (almost 60%) of students are male (Table 2.24).
- All age groups participate in vocational programs delivered by community centres which do not report through ACE provider umbrella organisations (Table 2.23).
- The median age of the students is 32.2 years (females: 29.9 years, 33.4 males: years, Figures 2.13 and 2.14), which is slightly below (2.4 years) that of the Australian population in 1998 and 3.8 years higher than that of VET students in Australia's publicly-funded VET sector in 1998.
- The participation patterns for males and females across the age groups are slightly different to each other with significantly more young females participating in this segment of the Australian ACE sector (Table 2.13). While in the male cohort persons younger than 26 comprise 26.2% of students females younger than 26 years make up 37.7% of the female cohort (Table 2.13 and Figure 2.14).

Figure 2.13: Cumulative frequency distribution of students enrolled in VET programs with community centres which do not report through ACE provider umbrella organisations, 1998

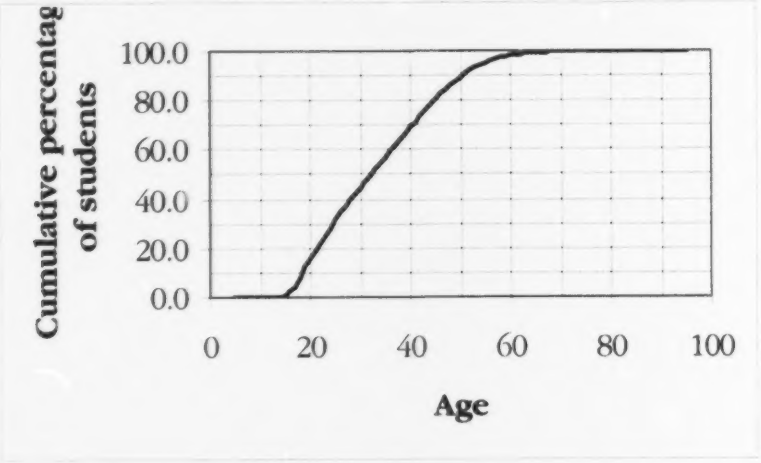


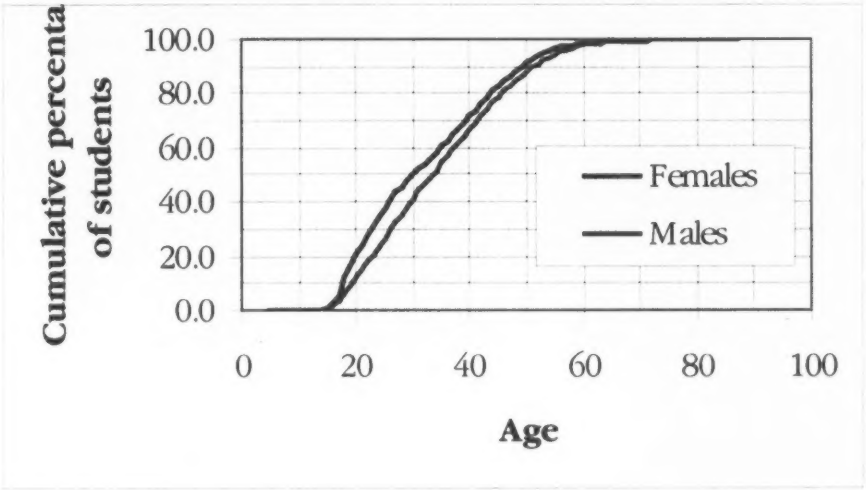
Table 2.23: Student participation in the fifth segment of the nationally reported ACE sector by age and sex, 1998

Age	% males	% females	% unknown sex	% students
15 to 19	8.1	15.4	1.1	11.1
20 to 24	12.5	16.3	2.3	14.0
25 to 39	36.3	32.3	9.2	34.4
40 to 64	31.1	27.0	3.4	29.2
Other ages	0.8	1.3	0.0	1.0
Unknown	11.1	7.6	83.9	10.4
Total (%)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
% students	57.8	41.3	1.0	100.0
Total ('000)	**5.2**	**3.8**	**0.1**	**9.1**

Table 2.24: Student participation and distribution of total annual hours in the fifth segment of the nationally reported ACE sector by sex and age group

	% students	% annual hours	Average hours
Sex			
Male	57.8	46.6	184.6
Female	41.3	52.3	289.4
Unknown sex	1.0	1.1	261.8
Total (%)	100.0	100.0	228.6
Age			
15 to 19 years	11.1	15.3	315.7
20 to 24 years	14.0	17.1	278.4
25 to 39 years	34.4	33.9	225.7
40 to 64 years	29.2	24.2	189.8
Other ages	1.0	0.9	211.1
Unknown age	10.4	8.6	188.9
Total (%)	100.0	100.0	228.6
Total ('000)	**9.1**	**2,076**	

Figure 2.14: Cumulative frequency distribution of male and female students enrolled in VET programs with community centres not reporting through major stakeholders for ACE providers and organisations, 1998



How much education and training?

- ACE not reporting through community umbrella organisations delivered a total of 2.08 million hours of VET in 1998. This represents 9.8% of annual hours delivered within Australia's ACE sector and reported to the national VET provider data collection.
- Students enrolled in VET with community centres not reporting through representative bodies for ACE providers and organisations averaged 229 hours each (Table 2.24). This is above the average annual hours per student in Australia's publicly-funded VET sector in 1998 (204 hours).
- Females, on average, undertake more hours of VET (290 hours) than males (185 hours).
- Young people undertake more hours in the segment of the nationally reported ACE sector considered here. Students aged 15 to 19 averaged 316 hours, 20 to 24 year olds 278 hours, 25 to 39 year olds 226 hours and 40 to 64 year olds 190 hours (Table 2.24).
- VET courses delivered by community centres but not reported through ACE provider umbrella organisations are relatively short with about half of the students (50.3%) undertaking equal or less than 24 hours of education and training.

Source of funding

- Most of the annual hours (80.6%) are funded from recurrent State and Territory allocations for VET and Commonwealth funds disbursed by the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA).
- A sixth (16.6%) of the annual hours are funded from State/Territory and Commonwealth specific purpose allocations for VET.
- The remainder of hours (2.9%) are funded on a fee-for-service basis with the costs of the education and training place paid by the student or an agency on behalf of the student.

What courses?

- Course enrolments in the segment of the nationally reported ACE sector under consideration increased dramatically, by 7 300, or 223.6%, from 3 300 in 1996 to 10 600 in 1998. In 1997 the number of course enrolments was 6 500.
- One-subject courses account for a third (31.0%) of enrolments and 9.4 % of annual hours. Course with more than ten subjects comprise 23.3% of enrolments and 48.6% of annual hours (Table 2.26).
- The most popular courses in terms of enrolments are in the land and marine resources, animal husbandry field of study which account for 15.9% of course enrolments and 6.8% of annual hours in 1998. In terms of annual hours the most popular field of study is business, administration and economics with 15.3% of course enrolments and 22.1% of annual hours (Table 2.25).

Table 2.25: Nationally reported course enrolments and annual hours in the fifth segment of the Australian ACE sector by field of study, 1998

Field of study	% course enrolments	% annual hours
Land and marine resources, animal husbandry	15.9	6.8
Architecture, building	5.3	0.7
Art, humanities and social sciences	4.8	6.3
Business, administration, economics	15.3	22.1
Education	2.1	1.3
Engineering, surveying	13.4	9.9
Health, community services	11.4	18.0
Law, legal studies	0.0	0.0
Science	1.7	2.1
Veterinary science, animal care	0.0	0.0
Services, hospitality, transportation	15.3	16.0
VET – multi-field education	14.9	16.8
Total (%)	100.0	100.0
Total ('000)	**10.6**	**2,076**

Table 2.26: Course enrolments and annual hours by number of modules in course.

Number of modules in course	% courses enrolments	% annual h ours
One	31.0	9.4
Two	10.2	4.8
three or four	11.0	10.4
five to seven	14.6	14.5
eight to ten	9.9	12.3
eleven to 15	12.9	23.2
more than 15	10.3	25.4
Total (%)	100.0	100.0
Total ('000)	**10.6**	**2,076**

What subjects?

- As with other participation figures module enrolments increased significantly over the past two years. In 1998, 69 300 VET subjects were undertaken at community centres not reporting through community umbrella organisations, 45.8% more than in 1997 (47 500) and 652.8% more than in 1996 (9 200).
- Almost two-thirds of education and training activity (64% of subject enrolments and 60% of annual hours) resulted in a successful completion:
  - 61.6% of module enrolments and 56.8% of annual hours were reported in a successful subject completion.
  - 2.8% of module enrolments and 2.8% of annual hours were reported as 'student not assessed – satisfactory completion of class hours'.
- In 1998 the most popular subjects were in the administration, business, economics, law discipline group which account for 22.7% of module enrolments and 20.7% of annual hours. Other popular areas of learning are health sciences (16.0% of module enrolments and 14.6% of annual hours) and social, educational and employment skills with 14.5% of enrolments and 15.7% of annual hours (Table 2.27).
- About 0.2% of modules and 0.7% of annual hours are delivered in correspondence mode.

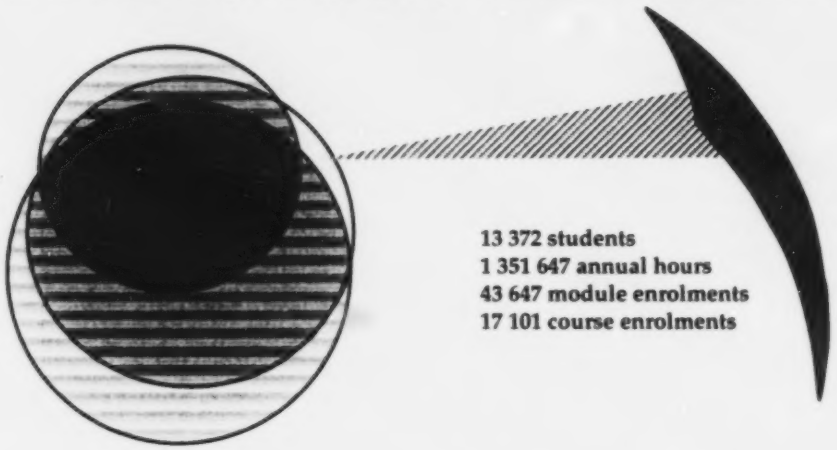
Table 2.27: Module enrolments and annual hours in the fifth segment of the ACE sector by area of learning, 1998

Area of learning	% module enrolments	% annual hours
Humanities	9.9	11.0
Social studies	0.7	1.0
Education	1.4	1.2
Sciences	3.0	3.4
Mathematics, computing	8.9	7.0
Visual/performing arts	1.4	2.7
Engineering processing	9.0	8.8
Health sciences	16.0	14.6
Administration, business, economics, law	22.7	20.7
Built environment	1.8	1.6
Agriculture, renewable resources	4.6	6.2
Hospitality, tourism and personal services	6.0	6.0
Social, educational and employment skills	14.5	15.7
Total (%)	100.0	100.0
Total ('000)	**69.3**	**2,076**

2.7 Sixth segment of the nationally reported ACE sector – VET programs not delivered by community centres but reported through ACE provider umbrella organisations

Vocational education and training programs delivered by education and training providers other than community centres but reported through representative bodies for ACE providers and organisations accounted for 13 400 students, 1.35 million annual hours, 43 700 module enrolments, and 17 100 course enrolments (Figure 2.15).

Figure 2.15: Vocational education and training activity delivered by community centres which do not report through ACE provider umbrella organisations, 1998



This segment of Australia's ACE sector comprises

- 0.7% of students,
- 0.4% of annual hours,
- 0.4% of module enrolments and
- 0.7% of course enrolments

reported to the national data collection in 1998.

Of Australia's ACE sector (as covered in the national VET provider database) VET programs delivered by education and training providers other than community centres but reported through major stakeholders for ACE providers and organisations account for

- 2.3% of students,
- 6.4% of annual hours,
- 4.5% of module enrolments and
- 2.2% of course enrolments

The number of students, annual hours and education and training providers in this segment of the nationally reported ACE sector by State/Territory is given in Table 2.28. The ACT, New South Wales and Western Australia did not report any education and training activity for the segment of the nationally reported ACE sector under consideration to the national data collection in 1998.

Table 2.28: Students participation in the sixth segment of Australia's nationally reported ACE sector, annual hours and number of education and training providers by State/Territory, 1998

State/ Territory	ACT	New South Wales	Northern Territory	Queensland	South Australia	Tasmania	Victoria	Western Australia	Australia
Students	0	0	900	500	6,300	2,500	3,200	0	**13,400**
Annual hours ('000)	0	0	44	40	284	222	762	0	**1,352**
Training providers	0	0	3	4	1	14	14	0	**36**

Student profile

- In 1998, more than 13 400 students were enrolled in VET programs delivered by education and training providers other than community centres but reporting through ACE provider umbrella organisations. This indicates that at least 0.1% of Australia's working age residents (15 to 64 year olds) were enrolled in this kind of personal enrichment programs.
- The segment of the nationally reported ACE sector considered here shows significant growth over the past two years. Student numbers apparently increased by 3 900, or 40.5%, since 1997, and 6 500, or 95.1%, since 1996.
- Almost two thirds of students are female (Table 2.30).
- Students across all ages enrol in vocational programs with education and training providers other than community centres which report through representative bodies for ACE providers and organisations (Table 2.29). Note that students aged 65 or higher (and hence above what is considered the working age) make up 4.6% of students. This indicates that VET is not necessarily undertaken for work-related purposes only.
- The median age of the students is 37.3 years (females: 37.8 years, males: 36.4 years, Figures 2.16 and 2.17), 2.7 years higher than that of the Australian population in 1998, 8.9 years higher than that of VET students in Australia's publicly-funded VET sector in 1998 and 16.9 years higher than that of university students.
- There are broad similarities in the participation patterns for male and female students across the age groups (Table 2.29). However, in the male cohort there is a significant greater likelihood for students being younger or equal than 28 years than in the female cohort. Persons younger than 29 years comprise 29.4% of male students but only 22.4% of female students (Figure 2.17).

Table 2.29: Student participation in the sixth segment of the nationally reported ACE sector by age and sex, 1998

Age	% males	% females	% unknown sex	% students
15 to 19	7.1	3.3	10.3	4.7
20 to 24	8.1	6.9	6.9	7.4
25 to 39	30.3	31.0	24.1	30.8
40 to 64	30.4	31.4	27.6	31.0
Other ages	4.7	5.0	10.3	4.9
Unknown	19.4	22.3	20.7	21.3
Total (%)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
% students	35.4	64.4	0.2	100.0
Total ('000)	**4.7**	**8.6**	**0.0**	**13.4**

Figure 2.16: Cumulative frequency distribution of students enrolled in VET programs with education and training providers which are not community centres but report through ACE provider umbrella organisations, 1998

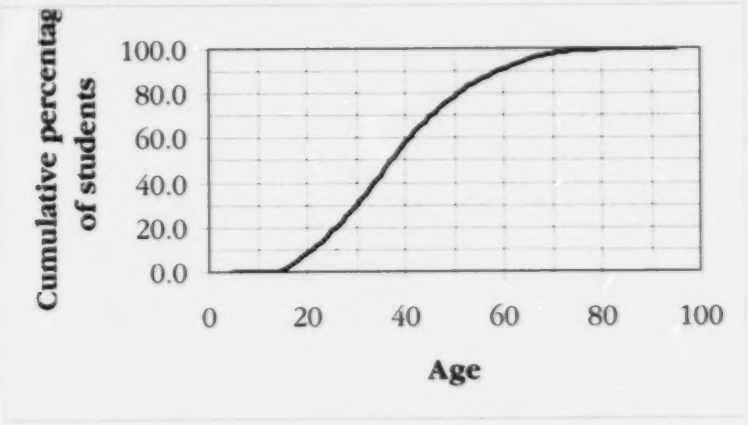


Figure 2.17: Cumulative frequency distribution of male and female students enrolled in VET programs with education and training providers other than community centres and not reporting through ACE provider umbrella organisations, 1998

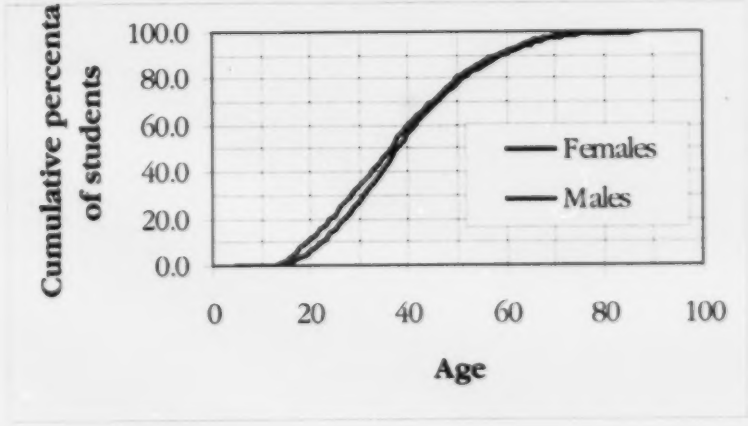


Table 2.30: Student participation and distribution of total annual hours in the sixth segment of the nationally reported ACE sector by sex and age group

	% students	% annual hours	Average hours
Sex			
Male	35.4	34.8	99.6
Female	64.4	64.9	101.9
Unknown sex	0.2	0.2	103.3
Total (%)	100.0	100.0	101.1
Age			
15 to 19 years	4.7	7.0	151.8
20 to 24 years	7.4	11.8	162.9
25 to 39 years	30.8	37.9	124.4
40 to 64 years	31.0	29.3	95.3
Other ages	4.9	3.4	70.0
Unknown age	21.3	10.6	50.5
Total (%)	100.0	100.0	101.1
Total ('000)	**13.4**	**1,352**	

How much education and training?

- education and training providers other than community centres and reporting through ACE provider umbrella organisations delivered a total of 1.35 million hours of VET in 1998. This represents 6.4% of annual hours delivered within Australia's ACE sector and reported to the national VET provider collection.
- Students enrolled in the sixth segment of the nationally reported ACE sector averaged 101.1 hours each (females: 101.9 hours, males: 99.6 hours, Table 2.30). This is about half of the average annual hours per student (204 hours) in Australia's publicly-funded VET sector in 1998.
- Young people undertake significantly more hours than older students in the segment of the nationally reported ACE sector considered here. Students aged 15 to 19 average 151.8 hours, 20 to 24 year olds 162.9 hours, 25 to 39 year olds 124.4 hours, 40 to 64 year olds 95.3 and students older than 64 69.4 hours (Table 2.30).
- VET courses delivered by community centres which do not report through ACE provider umbrella organisations are relatively short with about half of the students (50.5%) undertaking equal or less than 22 hours of education and training.

Source of funding[6]

- Most of the annual hours (87.4%) are funded from recurrent State and Territory allocations for VET and Commonwealth funds disbursed by the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA).
- A tenth of the annual hours are funded from State/Territory and Commonwealth specific purpose allocations for VET.
- The remainder of hours (2.6%) are funded on a fee-for-service basis with the costs of the education and training place paid by the student or an agency on behalf of the student.

[6] Based on 1.185 million annual hours for which the funding source is known.

What courses?

- Course enrolments in the segment of the nationally reported ACE sector under consideration increased dramatically from 7 800 in 1996 to 11 700 in 1997 to 17 100 in 1998.
- One-subject courses account for more than two-thirds of course enrolments and less than a third of annual hours. Courses with more than 15 subjects make up 1.7% of enrolments and 10.7% of annual hours (Table 2.32).
- The most popular courses are in the VET multi-field education field of study which account for 34.7% of course enrolments and 52.7% of annual hours in 1998. Other popular fields are business, administration and economics (16.1% of course enrolments and 18.0% of annual hours), education (14.5% of enrolments and 9.1% of annual hours) and art, humanities and social sciences (12.6% of enrolments and 5.8% of annual hours, Table 2.31).

Table 2.31: Course enrolments and annual hours in the sixth segment of the Australian ACE sector by field of study, 1998

Field of study	% course enrolments	% annual hours
Land and marine resources, animal husbandry	1.1	1.1
Architecture, building	0.4	1.2
Art, humanities and social sciences	12.6	5.8
Business, administration, economics	16.1	18.0
Education	14.5	9.1
Engineering, surveying	2.6	1.6
Health, community services	3.9	5.3
Law, legal studies	0.1	0.0
Science	6.6	1.6
Veterinary science, animal care	0.0	0.0
Services, hospitality, transportation	7.2	3.6
VET – multi-field education	34.7	52.7
Total (%)	100.0	100.0
Total ('000)	**17.1**	**1,331**

Table 2.32: Course enrolments and annual hours by number of modules in course.

Number of modules in course	% courses enrolments	% annual h ours
One	67.6	31.4
Two	12.0	11.6
three or four	8.4	12.8
five to seven	4.4	10.6
eight to ten	3.0	10.9
eleven to 15	2.8	11.9
more than 15	1.7	10.7
Total (%)	100.0	100.0
Total ('000)	**17.7**	**1,352**

What subjects?

- Module enrolments also experienced significant growth over the past two years. In 1998, 43 700 VET subjects were undertaken with education and training providers which are not community centres but report through representative bodies for ACE providers and organisations, 57.0% more than in 1997 (27 800) and 328.5% more than in 1996 (10 200).
- A small part of the growth from 1996 to 1997 is due to rescoping Australia's publicly-funded VET sector. While in 1996 a large part of module-enrolment-only activity undertaken with community education and training providers was reported as personal enrichment programs, from 1997 some of this activity was included in VET. In 1996, none of the VET activity in the sixth segment of the nationally reported ACE sector was module-enrolment-only, while in 1997 440 subjects and in 1998 620 subjects were reported as module-enrolment-only.
- About half of education and training activity (80% of subject enrolments and 75% of annual hours) resulted in a successful completion:
  - 49.5% of module enrolments and 45.6% of annual hours were reported in a successful subject completion.
  - 30.9% of module enrolments and 29.0% of annual hours were reported as 'student not assessed – satisfactory completion of class hours'.
- In 1998 the most popular subjects were in the social, educational and employment skills discipline group which accounts for 46.1% of module enrolments and 51.7% of annual hours in 1998. Other popular areas of learning are mathematics and computing (15.0% of module enrolments and 11.6% of annual hours) and administration, business, economics, and law with 11.2% of enrolments and 11.0% of annual hours (Table 2.33).
- About 0.1% of modules and annual hours are delivered in correspondence mode.

Table 2.33: Module enrolments and annual hours in the fifth segment of the ACE sector by area of learning, 1998

Area of learning	% module enrolments	% annual hours
Humanities	7.2	10.2
Social studies	0.2	0.2
Education	1.0	0.6
Sciences	0.0	0.0
Mathematics, computing	15.0	11.6
Visual/performing arts	4.7	4.4
Engineering processing	2.8	2.6
Health sciences	6.3	4.2
Administration, business, economics, law	11.2	11.0
Built environment	0.3	0.4
Agriculture, renewable resources	1.0	0.5
Hospitality, tourism and personal services	4.2	2.6
Social, educational and employment skills	46.1	51.7
Total (%)	100.0	100.0
Total ('000)	**43.7**	**1,352**

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